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U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

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ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON VETERANS BUSINESS AFFAIRS

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Taken on the date of:

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TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2006

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Taken at the offices of:

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U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

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409 3RD STREET, SOUTHWEST, SUITE 700

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WASHINGTON, D.C.

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21 Start time: 9:05 o'clock, a.m.

22 Taken before: Jackie Smith, a court reporter

1 COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

2 Dr. Samuel Metters  
3 Bettye Payne  
4 J. Ronald Zola  
5 Dr. Sarah R. Rogers  
6 Joseph C. Sharpe  
7 Ronald M. Miller  
8 William D. Elmore  
9 Thomas S. Bednarczyk

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1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

2 MR. BEDNARCZYK: I'd like to call

3 this meeting to order at 9:05.

4 The first order of business, I'd like

5 to take roll call of the membership. Tom  
6 Bednarczyk is here. Just for our guests, I am  
7 from the state of Connecticut. Bettye Payne,  
8 New Mexico. Ron Zola, home of the Pittsburgh  
9 Steelers, despite what anybody from the west  
10 coast thinks. Joe Sharpe, here in Washington.  
11 Ron Miller, Arkansas. Bill Elmore, SBA.

12 Can we -- on the outer perimeter, can we  
13 get your name, for the record, attendees?

14 MR. DOZIER: Bill Dozier.

15 MR. GOLDEN: Scott Golden, Rolling  
16 Thunder.

17 MR. CUNNINGHAM: Joe Cunningham,  
18 Culture Planning Solutions.

19 MR. LARA: Juan Lara, American  
20 Legion.

21 MR. BEDNARCZYK: Thank you, from  
22 everyone here for the committee.

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1 We have a little change in the way we're  
2 conducting business at this meeting. We have a  
3 court reporter, as opposed to having everything  
4 recorded, as we have. So everything still will  
5 be taken care of, but we're going to have to be  
6 careful as to how we communicate among  
7 ourselves, the slower the better. And for our

8 guests, everything is recorded, as you will read  
9 in our minutes that will be posted after this  
10 committee meeting. You will see your names, and  
11 comments, and everything else. So just keep  
12 that in mind.

13                   For members, just a quick logistics  
14 issue. Our accommodations, is everybody okay  
15 over at the Holiday Inn?

16                   MS. PAYNE: They are wonderful.  
17 Thank you, very much, for arranging that.

18                   MR. BEDNARCZYK: Good. I'd like to  
19 point out that Jerry Canton from Sacramento will  
20 not be here today. And Dennis DeMoret, our  
21 chairman, had an emergency, and is missing  
22 today, but he'll be here tomorrow.

5

1                   And let the record show that Dr. Sam  
2 Metters is here from the wonderful state of  
3 Virginia. Sarah Rogers, Dr. Sarah Rogers, we're  
4 expecting here. I just don't know where she is  
5 right at the moment.

6                   And I think this is a time for the  
7 committee. I think you saw the e-mail that we  
8 have a new member. LaVonne Jinks-Umstead will  
9 be joining the committee. She's not here today.  
10 She couldn't change her plans, based on the  
11 short notice of her appointment, but she'll be

12 attending tomorrow, right, Bettye?

13 MS. PAYNE: Yes, yes.

14 MR. BEDNARCZYK: So we will see her  
15 and meet her tomorrow. She lives in Alexandria,  
16 Virginia, by the way.

17 MR. ELMORE: I might mention, I think  
18 we'll have some additional guests later on, I  
19 think, our presenter from the Philadelphia  
20 Chamber of Commerce. Someone from the National  
21 Chamber may join us as well. I don't know that  
22 for a fact, and others.

6

1 MR. BEDNARCZYK: For everybody on the  
2 committee, you have a copy of the agenda. We  
3 have two full days. Today we're going to be  
4 focused on looking at some of the issues within  
5 the SBA itself. We have different guests coming  
6 to talk about the activities going on at the SBA  
7 here for veterans.

8 Tomorrow, we're really looking at the  
9 Department of Defense, who will be attending,  
10 and talking about their initiatives going on at  
11 DOD, Department of Veterans Affairs, and then  
12 Home Land Security will be here.

13 And then, as you know, we have  
14 Thursday morning set aside for our own internal

15 deliberations at the sub committee level for the  
16 three sub committees that we have. So we'll be  
17 breaking somewhere around noon on Thursday.

18               Okay. So if we could get into the  
19 very first part of our agenda, I'd like to turn  
20 the podium over to Mr. Elmore. One of the  
21 issues that we have discussed is to get a  
22 briefing, from Bill's office's point of view, of

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1 the activities going on within his operation in  
2 support of the veteran community.

3               MR. ELMORE: Well, welcome everybody,  
4 again. Bettye, I owe you a note. I've got it  
5 for you.

6               A few things, just sort of an  
7 overview because we haven't always met in these  
8 offices up here, simple things like restrooms.  
9 The men's restroom is just right out the hall  
10 and immediately on your left. And Cheryl is  
11 supposed to be here to tell us about the ladies'  
12 restrooms because I'm not sure.

13              MS. PAYNE: Pass the entrance desk,  
14 and it is on the left-hand side.

15              MR. ELMORE: That's what I thought.  
16 I wasn't sure. I think that's a good sign.

17              There's a few things I will pass  
18 around as well. I'm glad we have a new member.

19 I'm sorry she couldn't be with us today.

20                   This is Dick Sneider, my deputy. If  
21 you don't know Dick, he'll be part of the  
22 presentation my office will make later.

8

1                   There's a few things that I will pass  
2 around to you this morning as well that have to  
3 do not necessarily with SBA programs and the  
4 committee, but rather while you're in town, if  
5 there are things that you may consider doing.  
6 We will also have, at about 9:15, I believe,  
7 someone from our safety office who will come in  
8 and make a very short presentation in the event  
9 that there's a fire or emergency, that sort of  
10 thing, what the evacuation process procedures  
11 are.

12                   And we have a message that we would  
13 like read.

14                   MR. BEDNARCZYK: This message came  
15 from Dennis last evening. It says, "To  
16 committee members, SBA members, and guests: I  
17 must give my apology to everyone for my absence.  
18 I have been required to attend to a personal  
19 family issue and will surely miss this first  
20 absent session of the Small Business  
21 Administration Advisory Committee for Veteran

22 Affairs."

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1                   "I, therefore, turn this session over  
2 to my trusted vice-chairman," -- I didn't put  
3 that word in there -- "Mr. Tom Bednarczyk, to  
4 conduct this committee. With the actions, the  
5 trust set before you by our nation's veteran  
6 ranks, I wish you well. Sincerely, Dennis."

7                   Dennis will be here tomorrow, but  
8 that takes care of his apologies for today.

9                   MR. ELMORE: I'm going to pass around  
10 a couple things. One has to do with SBA, one  
11 doesn't, but you're in town until Thursday, so  
12 you should be looking for something to do  
13 tomorrow night. This is not an endorsement. I  
14 have not seen this movie, but it's a movie  
15 that's been sponsored by Iraq and Afghanistan  
16 Veterans of America. So the latest set of  
17 soldiers are having a screening Wednesday night  
18 of a documentary film called, "Why We Fight."  
19 Should anybody be interested in something to do  
20 Wednesday night, this is the information about  
21 it. I am not endorsing it.

22                   I also going to pass around, because

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1 we just got this ourselves yesterday with the  
2 release of the '07 budget, here's the agency's  
3 press release on that. In that release, I think  
4 you can find more information, if you drill  
5 down, and you have computers.

6               I would note, and you can chuckle if  
7 you'd like or not, that my office did get a  
8 raise from '06 to '07 in the budget, not quite  
9 cost of inflation, but I can tell you that in  
10 the context of many of the programs in town, if  
11 you're recommended even for small increases, it  
12 is something significant these days. So we  
13 appreciate that.

14              I can't talk a lot of detail about  
15 the rest of it because I, bluntly, haven't had  
16 time to dig into the budget and see what other  
17 kinds of effects, positively or negatively, we  
18 think it will have for veterans, but I will be  
19 doing that over the next few weeks.

20              Let's see if there is anything else I  
21 need to pass around. I don't think so,  
22 Mr. Chairman, other than I do have some

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1 materials about business matchmaking, but I will  
2 hold that until you make a presentation about  
3 the office. I think that's it, sir.

4 MR. BEDNARCZYK: When do you want to  
5 get into this?

6 MR. ELMORE: We were going to do that  
7 during the presentations at 11:00 to 12:00, and  
8 I should note that 11:00 to 12:00, Joe Zobota,  
9 from the Office of Advocacy, will be joining us  
10 at that time, and he'll be making a presentation  
11 about advocacy, prepared for the President,  
12 which I think for the first time in history has  
13 a significant segment focused specifically on  
14 veterans, and it also happens to focus on the  
15 research that not only Advocacy did with a lot  
16 of input from us, but that our office helped  
17 fund, which apparently, as I learned, other  
18 program offices working with that are just  
19 seeing also the support for the research we do.

20 MR. BEDNARCZYK: Okay. Getting back  
21 to the pre-printed agenda, I have to admit,  
22 Dennis and I haven't had a good communication as

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1 to what he meant by changes, additions, and  
2 deletions. I think one of the changes or  
3 additions he wanted to talk about was the new  
4 member, LaVonne, coming to the organization.  
5 Unfortunately, I can't fill in too much  
6 information about her because I just don't have  
7 that information available to me.

8                   MR. ELMORE: And I might mention,  
9 Mr. Chair, I don't either. The administrator  
10 appoints members of the committee. Often, my  
11 office is involved in some of the initial  
12 paperwork, but not necessarily. We have a  
13 special office that handles all of our advisory  
14 committees, and typically, they do all the  
15 background work, and get the attorneys involved,  
16 and all the things that people have to go  
17 through to be approved for this committee.  
18 That's where that came from. This is not  
19 somebody I believe I have ever talked with.

20                   MR. BEDNARCZYK: Moving on, I'd like  
21 to go around the table. We have, obviously, had  
22 some committee conference calls over the last

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1 few months since November amongst ourselves, and  
2 there's been a number of activities that have  
3 gone on within your own home regions and your  
4 own territories.

5                   So I think it would be a good  
6 opportunity now to update everybody as to what's  
7 been happening in your particular areas,  
8 anything that you want to tee up to make sure  
9 that we cover over the next couple of days,  
10 things that maybe you have heard from veterans

11 organizations in town, or in the local area, so  
12 that we all can put those together, make sure we  
13 cover them before we leave here on Thursday. So  
14 why don't I start around the table, Ron.

15                   MR. MILLER: Well, I guess probably  
16 the main thing is, the last time we met prior to  
17 moving back to my home state of Arkansas, I  
18 lived in Atlanta, Georgia for about 24 years.

19                   MR. ELMORE: Here's our safety guy.  
20 Why don't you hold off. Let's review the safety  
21 routine.

22                   (Building Safety Presentation)

14

1                   MR. BEDNARCZYK: Okay, Ron.

2                   MR. MILLER: I made a couple visits.  
3 One was to the veterans representative that  
4 operates out of Little Rock. We had a good  
5 meeting, and he briefed me on what's going on at  
6 the state level and their part of the region  
7 that encompasses Texas and so forth. He seemed  
8 to be a very pro active individual, and does a  
9 lot of good work. I met the deputy director,  
10 and she also said that he's very active in  
11 veteran affairs and veteran assistance for small  
12 business.

13                   The other visit that I made prior to  
14 going back home -- I worked in Atlanta for about

15 24 years, and I was a member of the Atlanta  
16 Vietnam Veterans Business Association, and they  
17 do a lot volunteer work with the USO. So they  
18 sent out a message to all of their members and  
19 asked if anyone wanted to volunteer to go down  
20 into the Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama  
21 area for the holidays, you know, to work a USO  
22 canteen, by the way, which I found very

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1 interesting.

2                   So I went down to Biloxi -- I mean,  
3 to Gulf Port, and spent eight days. And,  
4 basically, what we did is provided support for  
5 the National Guard and Reserve troops, mostly  
6 National Guard, that provided all the check  
7 point personnel for that area to prevent people  
8 from coming in that wasn't supposed to be there.  
9 They operated 24 hours a day, and during that  
10 time, we welcomed home several charter flights  
11 of mostly Mississippi National Guard people  
12 coming back in, that had finished their one-year  
13 tour. Well, there was a couple other flights.  
14 One came in from Vermont, and changed over, and  
15 went to another plane.

16                   I worked with Bill a little bit, on  
17 getting some information that we could provide

18 to these people vis-a-vis small business. And  
19 we, in addition to passing out information about  
20 that, AT&T provided free phone cards, all kind  
21 of things. So it was a very interesting eight  
22 days.

16

1               While I was there, I visited their  
2 events location for their small business effort.  
3 As you probably heard the administrator here,  
4 they put offices in for those three states to  
5 help with small business applications. And I  
6 visited the one in Biloxi. It was run by Ms.  
7 Betty White. And they had probably, I would  
8 say, at least 20 individuals who did nothing but  
9 accept applications for small business loans,  
10 impact loans, etc.. I was very impressed with  
11 it.

12               As we saw in our last meeting, they  
13 have actually approved somewhere in the  
14 neighborhood of 500 something million dollars  
15 worth of SBA loans for those three state areas  
16 down there. I was impressed with their  
17 operation.

18               MR. BEDNARCZYK: Interesting you  
19 bring that up, because the press -- I am only as  
20 good as the press in reading, but one of the  
21 things I have noticed in the press was that the

22 SBA has been taking a lot of shots at -- maybe

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1 not at processing loans, but not getting checks  
2 into people's hands. And you're saying --

3                   MR. MILLER: Well, all I saw was the  
4 function of accepting applications in that one  
5 area. I didn't go to New Orleans and I wasn't  
6 in the Alabama part. I worked strictly in Gulf  
7 Port, but I was very impressed with their  
8 operation. They were doing a great job. It  
9 seems that everybody, all the people that were  
10 applying for loans were happy with the situation  
11 there anyway. I was very impressed with it.

12                   MR. ELMORE: If you want, Mr. Chair,  
13 I can touch on it. I am involved in the  
14 day-to-day.

15                   MR. BEDNARCZYK: Sure. I think we  
16 have approved in excess of three billion dollars  
17 in loans, and perhaps even four.

18                   Did you see the last release on it,  
19 Dick?

20                   MR. SCHNEIDER: No, I did not.

21                   MR. ELMORE: But there is a lot of  
22 misnomer in that.

18

1                   A couple things on our disaster loan  
2 in response to disasters, most of those  
3 applications are for homeowners. Our disaster  
4 program does home loans and business loans, but  
5 about 80 percent, I believe, would be for home.  
6 At the same time, it is a disaster loan, it is  
7 not a grant. So if you can't show an ability to  
8 pay a loan back on paper, you're not going to  
9 get approved for a loan. And that is,  
10 historically, the way the loan is structured in  
11 the statutes. In fact, our experience,  
12 primarily, were the MREIDL loans, the  
13 disbursement site which is I think where the SBA  
14 has got the most heat. Because a loan's  
15 approved, you can't disburse, other than through  
16 a process that's tied into the activity where  
17 the facilities or the home is being repaired.  
  
18 So if you don't have a home to start with, or  
19 you don't have supplies, or you don't have a  
20 construction crew, and so on and so on, you are  
21 not going to disburse funds.  
22                   So the reality is there's been a lot

19

1 of reason why, driven, I think, by the way the  
2 loan program is structured as a disaster loan,



3 that there is always going to be some  
4 dissatisfaction with it. I'm not saying that to  
5 defend the agency, but understand part of it is  
6 a process, and it's like borrowing money in that  
7 sense from anybody else that you would go to.  
8 You have to you through tax returns, and  
9 information, and materials, and so on.

10 MR. SCHNEIDER: Just two footnotes to  
11 those comments. Also on the loan side, there  
12 are people that are looking for grants, but in  
13 order to be considered for a FEMA grant, you  
14 first have to be declined for an SBA loan. So  
15 that's one aspect.

16 Another thing is, especially in the  
17 New Orleans area -- it may run through the Gulf  
18 Port, Biloxi area too, is that they are not, so  
19 far as the disbursement, which that's one of the  
20 issues that really grabbed the headlines, is  
21 they are not sure where they are going to allow  
22 people to rebuild. And so it's been approved,

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1 but if a homeowner, a businessman, is not  
2 approved for rebuilding or restructuring in that  
3 particular area, we certainly don't want to  
4 disburse.

5 MR. BEDNARCZYK: Okay. Thank you.  
6 Anything else, Ron?

7                   Okay.  Bettye, I know yesterday they  
8 had some quiet time together.  I know there's a  
9 lot of good things happening down in New Mexico.

10                  MS. PAYNE:  Yes, a lot of good things  
11 have happened.  A lot of them have been a direct  
12 result of the last meeting, attending the  
13 reception meeting, the representative from the  
14 Department of Labor, and we continued our  
15 discussions once we got home.  Didn't know the  
16 guy existed, and now we found each other and we  
17 won't let go, but New Mexico is very active in  
18 the veteran program.

19                  One of the things I was able to get  
20 from him was a listing of all our veteran-owned  
21 businesses in the state, and also the disabled  
22 veteran-owned businesses.  It's not that hard to

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1 get, guys, and it was very valuable information  
2 to have, to see the extent.

3                  New Mexico is in the process and has  
4 developed a coalition between state and federal  
5 veteran support agencies to make sure that we're  
6 not duplicating efforts, and to make sure that  
7 we present a strong front to our own state  
8 government and legislature.  And I think that is  
9 a good thing, and it's something that other

10 states ought to look at doing; instead of  
11 fragmenting our support, come up with a  
12 coalition.

13               I also worked with the Secretary of  
14 Veteran Affairs, John Garcia, and we'll be  
15 inviting him to speak before us, hopefully, in  
16 May, but they are looking at doing a veterans  
17 entrepreneurial program. The state legislature  
18 has funded this program, and I'm going to work  
19 with him to help develop a program that actually  
20 is centered to get the veteran prepared to own a  
21 business. Something that would be a two-year  
22 program, consisting of education and mentor

22

1 protege with established businesses in order to  
2 have a veteran hit the ground running the day  
3 they retire to open up a business. So I am  
4 really excited about that. And, hopefully,  
5 we'll be ready to put out some good information  
6 on our next veterans business development  
7 program which is scheduled for the March time  
8 period.

9               The state legislature is going on  
10 right now. We had Veterans Day about two weeks  
11 ago, and out of that Veterans Day, a couple good  
12 things were announced by the governors, not only  
13 the funding for the veterans entrepreneur

14 program, but also the state is going to follow  
15 the federal lead on this; three percent of all  
16 states business are for service disabled  
17 veterans. Also, money for homeless veterans,  
18 New Mexico is proud to say, is funding that real  
19 well. So I think we have a lot of good things  
20 going on in the state.

21 I'm happy to have a good relationship  
22 with our SBA district office there. Tony

23

1 McMann, the Secretary of Veteran Affairs, is  
2 fired up, and wants to come here and talk to us  
3 about the good things that are happening. And I  
4 hope that some of the programs that are going on  
5 in New Mexico can serve as a template for the  
6 rest of the nation on how to approach this, how  
7 to make it work, and get other states that  
8 hadn't gotten their legislature involved in  
9 funding issues. That's about it.

10 MR. BEDNARCZYK: I think the state  
11 should be commended.

12 MS. PAYNE: It's nice to be on top of  
13 the list for a change.

14 MR. ELMORE: Just one comment,  
15 Bettye, and I will get you a copy, the old  
16 veteran entrepreneur training was a model

17 created in the '80s. My office upgraded. We've  
18 got it in print and CD, but we have to find it  
19 for you, so we will get that to you. It can be  
20 used as a model for not only how does one access  
21 a veterans entrepreneur training program, but  
22 also the engagement of the private volunteer men

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1 and women.

2                   MS. PAYNE: Fantastic. I don't  
3 believe in re-inventing the wheel, if there is  
4 something good.

5                   MR. ELMORE: Also in the room, Lou  
6 runs the Veterans Resource Center in Boston, and  
7 we'll also put you in touch with our five  
8 centers that we fund, and also with Pat Levy in  
9 St. Louis, who is running a veteran business  
10 development program as well, with a lot of  
11 private involvement.

12                   MS. PAYNE: Super. Thank you.

13                   MR. BEDNARCZYK: All right.  
14 Continuing on, Ron, anything you'd like to  
15 update the committee on?

16                   MR. ZOLA: Well, I missed the last  
17 meeting, so my apologies for that, in November.

18                   At the last teleconference, Sarah  
19 expressed an interest in having some assistance  
20 with her committee, so I volunteered. She

21 graciously accepted, so I will be helping out or  
22 getting in the way, as the case may be.

25

1                   Having said that, it's interesting  
2 listening to all the initiatives that are going  
3 on around the country where the business

4 communities are creating opportunities for  
5 veterans in the business arena.

6                   I got a cell phone call last night.  
7 In my previous life, I ran a nonprofit in  
8 Pittsburgh, Department of Labor, HUD-VA. We  
9 were a United Way agency. I had developed a  
10 group of friends in a nonprofit social service  
11 arena in Pittsburgh, and some of them worked  
12 closely on projects, some of them being in the  
13 Urban League. I got a call last night from a  
14 friend of mine saying, "Ron, when you get back,  
15 we want to speak with you."

16                   "Why is that?"

17                   "Well, because we're thinking of  
18 doing a program."

19                   And while she's speaking with me, it  
20 has your program written all over it because,  
21 for a variety of reasons for the clientele that  
22 the Urban League specifies, they wish to take

1 those types of services into the community.

2                   And I spoke with Bill this morning.

3 I said, "Isn't it a small world," and Bill tells  
4 me that there is something of a national level  
5 initiative among the Urban League. I think it's  
6 all tied together. I didn't realize they were  
7 interested or had the willingness to get into  
8 this, but I think when you can partner in  
9 communities -- so I am kind of excited to go  
10 back because we're in an excellent veterans  
11 community, and through this committee, to assist  
12 another organization.

13                   My experience is, it works better  
14 when you partner. Having said that, you can  
15 also be a good partner, and it brings a lot more  
16 resources and assets to the table. So I am  
17 excited about that.

18                   MR. ELMORE: If I can do follow-up, I  
19 didn't know about this. One of our five veteran  
20 outreach centers is in Pittsburgh, and it's our  
21 newest one. SBA at the same time has a pilot  
22 program, I believe, in five locations with the

1 Urban League, trying to create Urban League

2 business centers, if you will, and I have  
3 watched it develop. I haven't really been  
4 involved in the different programs, but what I  
5 know from my background and history running our  
6 nonprofit in St. Louis, is that many veterans of  
7 color, certainly in St. Louis where I came from,  
8 were involved in Urban League. One of our best  
9 partners was the St. Louis Urban League.

10 I am hopeful, now that I hear about  
11 an Urban League effort in Pittsburgh, that we  
12 can tie that directly or indirectly with our  
13 program, and perhaps there will be value added  
14 on both sides.

15 MR. BEDNARCZYK: Who should Ron be  
16 working through at the SBA, you?

17 MR. ELMORE: Yes. At this point,  
18 just bring it to me, and I will run interference  
19 inside the building, or someone on my staff.  
20 Is it Strategic Alliance that does our Urban  
21 League program?

22 MR. SCHNEIDER: It would certainly be

28

1 them.

2 MR. ELMORE: We will put Ron and the  
3 Urban League folks in touch.

4 MR. BEDNARCZYK: The Office of



5 Strategic Alliance is here this afternoon.

6 Would that be a good time to talk to Taylor Talt  
7 about that?

8                   MR. ELMORE: We could ask him and see  
9 if he's got specific knowledge about the Urban  
10 League program. The woman who runs Strategic  
11 Alliance is out on extended leave right now, so  
12 I'm not sure if Taylor's been involved in that.  
13 I just don't know, but certainly we could ask.

14                   MR. BEDNARCZYK: Thank you, Ron.  
15 Dr. Rogers.

16                   DR. ROGERS: As Ron said, he is, in  
17 fact, my hero. We're going to be doing some  
18 more exploration in the Department of Defense  
19 contracting. One of the things I am looking at  
20 is how can small businesses become primes when  
21 faced with these huge bundled contracts.

22                   My own experience right now, I am in

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1 the process of landing my own contract for my  
2 own business now on one of these major vehicles,  
3 and experiencing personally some of the  
4 accounting difficulties and things that go with  
5 that. But we have also been able to kind of  
6 crack the door, been able to ask some questions  
7 about when do they have open enrollment times to  
8 even apply to become a prime on some of these

9 big, bundled things. There has not been voiced  
10 or really thought about open windows. Right  
11 now, the restriction is anywhere from 18 months  
12 to two years of history that a company must have  
13 to be able to apply to become a prime, and none  
14 of that is quite settled in stone. So I am  
15 still trying to talk with some of the in systems  
16 commands on the Navy side. Then I'm going to  
17 talk to Army, with some of the other groups,  
18 with my good buddy, Ron, and all my fellow  
19 committee members, to explore just where are the  
20 monies set aside for disabled veteran, small  
21 owned business groups, and that's kind of a  
22 golden ticket in DOD.

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1                   It is very much untapped, but what  
2 about all the other veteran businesses, and what  
3 access do they truly have. One of the things  
4 that I am also discovering is that some of the  
5 large companies who are primes on these  
6 contracts are reticent to pursue the mentor  
7 protege program. They are willing to assist  
8 small businesses, but not officially in that  
9 program, and I am trying to find out why.  
10 I just talked to ANTE, and they told me they are  
11 absolutely opposed to doing that, that their

12 corporate headquarters will not let them do  
13 that. I am talking with them that it is kind of  
14 interesting, what would SBA do to help you make  
15 that more attractive. We're going to talk about  
16 what is your experience. Interestingly, they  
17 have also just been bought by General Dynamics.  
18 The company that I used work for also had a  
19 similar reticence.

20                   Of course, these companies are always  
21 changing, their leadership is always evolving.  
22 So maybe we can make some inroads there to find

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1 out what might make it more attractive, or if  
2 they are not going to utilize that, what else  
3 might they use as kind of a partner thing in  
4 that, because ANTE and General Dynamics are  
5 active all across DOD, and they bring to the  
6 table the bulk of the small businesses that DOD,  
7 they generally outline as guidelines, that you  
8 need to have 40 percent by small businesses in  
9 your contracts with the Federal Government for  
10 DOD.

11                   So that's where I am right now. And  
12 I got lost this morning, that's why I am late.  
13 I walked three blocks in the cold.

14                   MR. BEDNARCZYK: This is not San

15 Diego weather.

16 DR. ROGERS: No, it is not.

17 DR. METTERS: Mr. Chairman, may I add  
18 to what she's said. And, Bill, maybe you can  
19 help me out, but I recall sometime ago we got a  
20 letter, executive order, from the President,  
21 that said bundling would be done away with.  
22 Now, the agencies are not jumping on that, as

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1 they should.

2 And if we, as a group, don't enforce  
3 that, it is never going to happen. So there is  
4 an instrument, and I'm sure you can get a copy  
5 of the letter. I think he had one.

6 DR. ROGERS: Ron and I have looked at  
7 that.

8 DR. METTERS: No more bundling.

9 The other part, I don't quite  
10 understand, when you say open enrollments to be  
11 a prime, when these things come out in the CDD,  
12 they will announce a source. If you want to go  
13 after it as a small business, you have to  
14 demonstrate that you have the capability of  
15 doing that. If you don't to that, if you don't  
16 have enough people in the domain to justify a  
17 small business set aside, then it goes full and  
18 open, the big boys. And that's when you try to

19 get someone's team. If you want to be a prime,  
20 you have got to be very aggressive, and to go  
21 after these things as you see fit, and use this  
22 letter as a handle, and go to different

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1 agencies. Don't wait for open season. I have  
2 never heard of that.

3 DR. ROGERS: These major contracts  
4 like Seaport E, it's an open season.

5 DR. METTERS: You are listed on the  
6 OCR -- and what is this other thing?

7 MR. ELMORE: CCR.

8 DR. METTERS: And there is another  
9 thing that SBA used to have.

10 MR. ELMORE: Used to be Pro Net.

11 DR. METTERS: If you have your web  
12 page on that when they are looking for different  
13 subs to make up that 40 percent, that is where  
14 you get the most. Bill, can we get a copy of  
15 that letter?

16 MR. ELMORE: We can certainly dig it  
17 out. And it strikes me, Mr. Chairman, that part  
18 of what you're talking about here, there's a  
19 couple elements of that this we can help you  
20 with perhaps. First off, if you want someone  
21 from our office to talk about bundling,

22 debundling, what the processes are, what steps

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1 are available, we can certainly set that up.

2 You just need to let us know that.

3           I think the other is, and this sort  
4 of just goes to small business, historically,  
5 there's always been something of a struggle, if  
6 that's the right term, between big business and  
7 small business in federal contracting. So if  
8 there's specific recommendations that you can  
9 develop, especially as they are germane to  
10 disabled vets and vets, in that whole arena,  
11 please, I would suggest when you get into your  
12 deliberations as a committee or sub committee,  
13 bring them to us. Include them in your annual  
14 report to Congress, if you had specific  
15 recommendations, do that. That's the purpose of  
16 the committee.

17           One other point, DOD, I think, is  
18 including disabled vets, and I believe in there  
19 a mentor protege program. That was a  
20 legislative change. When they are in here  
21 tomorrow, you may want to talk with them about  
22 that.

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1                   MR. BEDNARCZYK: I can tell you from  
2 experience on Seaport E, that Seaport E, I think  
3 there was a period from the time the initial  
4 award was made where they selected the original  
5 prime contractor. There was a period where  
6 nobody was able to get on to Seaport E as a  
7 subcontractor. However, I can also tell you  
8 from experience that at this time, it takes 24  
9 hours for a prime to insert a subcontractor on  
10 to Seaport E.

11                  DR. ROGERS: Yes.

12                  MR. BEDNARCZYK: I really don't know  
13 the logistics why now it is only 24 hours but my  
14 company has been put on three primes as  
15 subcontractors in the last six months with  
16 almost no time whatsoever. So, you're right,  
17 there is no consistency to this.

18                  DR. ROGERS: They are kind of  
19 exploring, I think, how they are doing this.

20                  MR. BEDNARCZYK: Because for some  
21 companies, this may happen quickly. Other  
22 companies, it may turn out to be a long event.

1 There is no reason and rhyme for what people are  
2 doing out there. It's something we need to  
3 delve into, because there is no question that

4 from the prime's point of view, the primes  
5 need -- they are the ones who create the avenue  
6 for us to drive our trucks on, so to speak.

7 DR. ROGERS: Well, one of the primes  
8 now, SAIC alerted me that open season is up for  
9 me to become a prime.

10 MR. BEDNARCZYK: No. A sub?

11 DR. ROGERS: No. A prime.

12 There is a new open window. I am trying to  
13 figure out, now, there is a window to become a  
14 prime, you're right. They seem to have sorted  
15 out the subcontractor piece. Now, how often is  
16 this intended to happen from now on, is the  
17 window going to close soon and not be open for a  
18 couple years?

19 DR. METTERS: Sir, I think I can help  
20 you out. Seaport E is a real good example.  
21 This thing was awarded years and years ago.  
22 Every year, for the first year, one year, and

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1 the next year is an option year, a follow-on  
2 that has to be awarded and it has to be  
3 announced, if it's not a part of the --

4 DR. ROGERS: RFP. During open season  
5 is when the Government goes back and looks at  
6 all of its primes and its subs, to see who are



7 non-performing subs, to see who are low hanging  
8 fruit. And they replace the small business with  
9 another more aggressive, small business.  
10 They have an open window on that from the time  
11 the contract ends until it starts up again. We  
12 just had one done in Alabama. It is called the  
13 Amscon Express Aviation & Missile Command,  
14 combined together December 31st. December 31st  
15 is the cutoff date. January 15th is when you  
16 start up again. So that open window you're  
17 talking about was December 31st to January 15th.  
18 That's on all contracts. That doesn't say we go  
19 from one to five years completely. Most of them  
20 will say that it's only one year with four-year  
21 option, or one year with ten-year option. Those  
22 kind will always have an open season. It goes

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1 on every year. They are redone, some things,  
2 it took them a couple years. And there is a  
3 definite future in this, and I haven't read the  
4 whole thing.  
5 DR. METTERS: Let me help you out a  
6 little bit too on this. This really bothers me.  
7 I have been out here a little bit longer than  
8 you have. I have been through the good times,  
9 the bad times, what have you. I wouldn't waste  
10 my money in trying to get on an IDIQ. That's

11 what you're talking about. All that does is  
12 give you license to hunt. As we say, it puts  
13 you on the dance floor, but you have got to find  
14 somebody to dance with. And how they do it, you  
15 have to go out and find work and bring back in  
16 to put under their instrument. And if you use  
17 their instrument, Seaport, they get two percent  
18 or five percent pass through. But most young  
19 guys get on the contract, hey, I am on this  
20 contract. Are you going to give me some work?  
21 They don't give you work. They give you license  
22 to hunt, and that's all IDIQs.

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1 DR. ROGERS: I am on that side of it  
2 right now, but I am about to become a prime  
3 probably.

4 DR. METTERS: Prime is the best way  
5 to go for a small business.

6 DR. ROGERS: I am actually partnered  
7 with three major corporations right now.

8 DR. METTERS: Good for you.

9 DR. ROGERS: And I'm probably just  
10 lucky because I'm known from my own past  
11 performance in the military.

12 DR. METTERS: That's right, you've  
13 got to have something strong.

14 DR. ROGERS: And that helps, but it  
15 is kind of a daunting process, because if SEIC  
16 had not contacted me up front, we're going to  
17 set you up with your license to kill and start.

18 DR. METTERS: In your organization,  
19 all she has to do is get on the phone. You've  
20 got somebody up here that deals with that, and  
21 you need to put her in touch with him. And she  
22 can tell you how it works. Dale Harriston, and

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1 some of the other people.

2 MR. BEDNARCZYK: If I may, what you  
3 bring up, Sarah, first, the procurement sub  
4 committee, but I think you are just a little  
5 microcosms of the difficulties that the veteran  
6 businesses have in trying to deal within the  
7 environment. Now, tomorrow, we have DOD here,  
8 so I think some of the issues that you raise  
9 today might be interesting to chat with them  
10 about, because the issue of bundling and  
11 unbundling certainly, from their perspective,  
12 they are the ones initiating the procurement.

13 DR. METTERS: Or you have someone  
14 from your office, and we need to have someone  
15 here in the White House to say, are you going to  
16 poo-poo this letter that the President wrote

17 about non-bundling, or are we serious about this  
18 thing. And they aren't being challenged, and it  
19 is our job to do that.

20                   MR. MILLER: I think a couple  
21 follow-ups, Sam, you raised a point, if it is  
22 White House involvement, rest assured I am not

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1 the guy that picks up the phone and calls the  
2 White House, but we have others in the building  
3 that liaison with the White House, and our  
4 deputy chief of staff. So if at some point, if  
5 you want to sort of discussion with them, you  
6 need to let them know. We will put it on the  
7 agenda.

8                   Basically, how this works is, we try  
9 to draft out an agenda. We shoot it out to  
10 Dennis. Dennis shoots it around and comes back,  
11 and that is how it ends up, which is why at the  
12 beginning, it is open and flexible. If you want  
13 to change it, do.

14                   Two other points, and I think, sam,  
15 this is also where you were going, and Dr.  
16 Rogers, you, as well. There really is a need  
17 for training. Not everybody understands this  
18 nuance. Dr. Metters has learned a lot of this  
19 through trial and error. I am sure it just  
20 can't all be transposed in a class.

21                   On the other hand, we're trying to  
22 develop training through defense acquisition

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1 university and through our office of federal  
2 contracts with Teresa, who presented, I believe,  
3 last meeting before you. So if you have things  
4 through your sub committee specifically that  
5 relate to training around these kind of details,  
6 tell us that's what you need, and at the same  
7 time, give us the inside of what you know so  
8 that we can try to incorporate those lessons  
9 into the training, make it available, as best we  
10 can, and, hopefully, accelerate veterans  
11 learning about it. I know about IDIQ, but I  
12 don't really know, in fact, how they work  
13 because I have never done that. And most  
14 veterans, whether they are a business guy or  
15 somebody inside an agency, is going to be in a  
16 similar position. So all of that would be  
17 helpful.

18                   The other point, which is a different  
19 issue is I think, Bettye, you touched on it and  
20 perhaps Ron a little bit in what you said. We  
21 didn't hear from Joe yet.

22                   MR. BEDNARCZYK: We're getting there.

1                   MR. MILLER: Is the whole idea, is  
2 what is happening at the state level. I really  
3 think that's an area that is wide open. And if  
4 the committee wants to look at identifying,  
5 developing, suggesting sort of program  
6 approaches that you might then ferment out to  
7 the state levels, I think that's within your  
8 authority. And I would urge you to take a  
9 serious look at that, Bettye, because I think  
10 we're going to see increasing activity at the  
11 state level when it comes to vets disabled, and  
12 reservists, and guard members.

13                   MR. BEDNARCZYK: Thank you, Doctor.

14                   Now, Joe, anything you'd like to  
15 bring us up to date on since our last conference  
16 call.

17                   MR. SHARPE: Well, since our last  
18 meeting here, Ron and I have spent a lot of time  
19 on both the House and Senate side, just pushing  
20 the reserve and guard issue. And we have gotten  
21 quite a bit of positive feedback from that.

22                   We have also been working very

1 closely with the Department of Labor, the VA,  
2 and other groups, doing the same thing, really

3 pushing to see why can't they expand the TAP  
4 Program, why isn't there a small business  
5 component.

6           We have also had the subject matter  
7 of a lot of our testimony of our commander, and  
8 written testimony, and we have also been keeping  
9 in closer contact with our commission members.  
10 Many of them are leaders all across the country.  
11 They have become very active also, as far as  
12 trying to get the reserves and National Guard.  
13 They also understand that there is a strong need  
14 to include a small business component to  
15 everything that they are doing.

16           We have also been involved in  
17 promoting a lot of the employment fairs on the  
18 national and local level, and the local level  
19 organizations like the VFW and DAV. There is a  
20 job fair in Pittsburgh, and he is doing that  
21 with the help from the VFW, DAV. We're also  
22 discussing adding the small business component

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1 in that respect. We have also been more active  
2 in promoting in procurement fairs or business  
3 fairs that other organizations are doing through  
4 our league's website.

5           We're working with Lewis Kelly.

6 Lewis Kelly is a member of our small business  
7 task force. He's done a number of courses that  
8 we're aware of in Boston where we have also  
9 tried to put that information out, and get that  
10 to veterans who may know about it, two of his  
11 classes. He started giving a class this weekend  
  
12 in Washington, and so we're very pleased with  
13 that also. Let's see, what else?

14                   MR. BEDNARCZYK: Have you or your  
15 organization dealt with this Senate Bill 1014,  
16 the one that Dennis has been working on as well?

17                   MR. SHARPE: That's something that we  
18 have discussed and brought up, yes, and our  
19 commission members know about it.

20                   The other thing is, I talked to one  
21 of our commission members yesterday about the  
22 initiative because we're feeding more

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1 information to them, and he has started working  
2 with a lot of the state legislatures there. He  
3 is put out blueprint on how he wants the leagues  
4 and other service organizations to start really  
5 hitting local officials. And we'd like to kind  
6 of use that as a blueprint to send out to other  
7 commission members.

8                   We're having our Washington



9 Conference at the end of this month, on the  
10 27th. Part of that will be devoted to business  
11 issues. The chairman here, Teresa, and other  
12 individuals will be participating in that. And  
13 we're also getting ready for a national  
14 convention in Salt Lake, which we're trying to  
15 turn that into a job benefits and procurement  
16 fair where we also will have individuals come  
17 out and start teaching classes. So we have  
18 really done a push to try and focus the leagues  
19 on those employment and business issues, because  
20 in the past, we have always primarily focused on  
21 medical issues. But now, since we're getting  
22 more and more feedback from the field, other

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1 heavy employment issues in the rural areas that  
2 people are becoming more concerned with all that  
3 National Guard and reservists returning, not  
4 finding jobs. Everyone knows someone whose  
5 business was impacted by the deployment. So  
6 we're continuing to raise awareness to that, and  
7 trying to join forces where we're lobbying on a  
8 national and local level.

9 MR. BEDNARCZYK: Thank you. Sam,  
10 anything you'd like to update the committee on?

11 DR. METTERS: Sitting here thinking  
12 what could I tell you guys that you don't

13 already know. You guys get the news at the same  
14 time I do, and I get my information from the  
15 newspaper. This is the nation's capitol in this  
16 area. I am responsible for Washington, D.C.,  
17 Maryland, and Virginia, so to speak, but I will  
18 say in the state of Virginia, we just had a  
19 change in governors, Kaine replaced Warner. And  
20 somehow, I talked to Warner years and years ago  
21 and said, "You have over 750,000 veterans in  
22 this state, plus all the military institutions."

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1 I said, "You need to reach out to these guys,  
2 because if you have any aspirations, you may  
3 need these guys down the line." And sure enough  
4 about four weeks later, he gave a reception for  
5 all retired vets and active duty vets who would  
6 like to come, and he was surprised. The  
7 veterans were surprised, and it was a very, very  
8 successful event. And Kaine came along, and he  
9 wants to sort of follow the same model. And he  
10 met with us during our last meeting and said,  
11 I'm going to follow the same what have you, the  
12 program that my predecessor had, and that we're  
13 going to reach out to vets. Its been improved.  
14 Then opened two cemeteries, one Amelia Erhart,  
15 and another called Harden. And they were slow

16 getting started but now they are filling up, and  
17 I just got a letter the other day where he  
18 appointed four more officers. They increased  
19 the budget. They are taking veterans serious.  
20 We're at war, and they realize the President has  
21 emphasis on that, so governors have the emphasis  
22 on that too.

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1                   So that's what has happened since the  
2 last time we met. And, of course, I am invited  
3 to these things, and I try to make them when I  
4 can.

5                   MR. BEDNARCZYK: That's great.

6                   DR. METTERS: And I do get literature  
7 from time to time on the state level, and I fax  
8 them off to Dennis, and we stay in touch.

9                   MR. BEDNARCZYK: Everybody has been  
10 getting e-mails from Dennis.

11                  MS. PAYNE: A pound worth.

12                  MR. BEDNARCZYK: By the book load.  
13 I think I am last. I'm going to pass this  
14 around. As you know, I am humbled by all your  
15 experiences, by the things you have done in more  
16 of your careers working with veterans.

17                  I have a problem in the state of  
18 Connecticut. I have scheduled for Thursday,  
19 which is our off session, at 9:30, a conference

20 call with Professor Rose Bednart, who is not a  
21 cousin given we debate how we spell our names,  
22 somebody shortened something. But Rose had been

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1 working from the gateway community college  
2 level, putting together a veterans  
3 entrepreneurial program to start within the city  
4 of New Haven, but to work itself through the  
5 state. And she called me, asking me for some  
6 advice. And the questions, I think are easy for  
7 you all around the table to contribute answers  
8 to because you had your past experiences. So I  
9 have scheduled a 9:30 conference call Thursday  
10 morning for a half hour because Rose is going to  
11 call us, and she has some questions that she'd  
12 like some advice on to help strengthen her  
13 program.

14               I am going to be taking her to the  
15 commissioner for the Department of Veteran  
16 Affairs in the state of Connecticut to get the  
17 commissioner involved in her program so that we  
18 can spread it throughout the state, but once  
19 again, Bettye, the state of Connecticut is a  
20 little bit behind you, in terms of getting a  
21 program like this off the ground. This gives  
22 you an idea of what she's working on, as far as

1 her program. So this is what we're going to be  
2 talking about on Thursday.

3 MS. PAYNE: Do you have any more  
4 copies of that? We're short two.

5 MR. BEDNARCZYK: I think that covers  
6 everybody on the membership on the committee.  
7 Bill, I have three open issues from our last  
8 meeting that I'd like to tee up so we can get a  
9 status on from you.

10 MR. ELMORE: All right.

11 MR. BEDNARCZYK: From my notes, we  
12 crafted a letter to the Department of Energy  
13 back following our November meeting that I  
14 thought was going to be sent out to the  
15 Department of Energy. Can you give us an update  
16 where that stands?

17 MR. ELMORE: The letter was drafted,  
18 as you are aware, and we went back and forth on  
19 that a few times, and honestly, it never was  
20 sent.

21 MR. BEDNARCZYK: Okay.

22 MR. ELMORE: So I will admit to an

1 administrative failure. It wasn't an

2 intentional effort not to send it. It was more  
3 just that the process of that, as we finally got  
4 into the policies, and the letter never was  
5 sent. I don't have an excuse.

6 MR. BEDNARCZYK: Can we get a copy of  
7 the letter, so when Dennis is here tomorrow, he  
8 could sign it and we will mail it?

9 MR. MILLER: Yes.

10 DR. METTERS: What about the other  
11 one we had going out to the Department of  
12 Energy, was that scraped?

13 MR. ELMORE: That was the same  
14 letter.

15 DR. METTERS: I thought you said from  
16 the state.

17 MR. BEDNARCZYK: No, no, energy.

18 The second thing, our annual report,  
19 Dick, I know, early January we went back and  
20 forth with the report to Congress and to the  
21 President. Did we ever send is that out?

22 MR. ELMORE: I have it on my desk for

1 you to sign as co-chair, and I was going to have  
2 you do that at lunch, and we will distribute  
3 through the process. It is a distribution  
4 process. I am not even sure if Dick knows about

5 this where we send it to somebody, I think it is  
6 in the Government printing office, and it gets  
7 distributed to all Congressional offices. So  
8 that should go out sometime over the next couple  
9 days.

10                   MR. BEDNARCZYK: Well, that answers  
11 your question. You are here this afternoon.  
12 It's ready for distribution other than my  
13 signature.

14                   MR. ELMORE: As far as I am  
15 concerned, absolutely.

16                   MR. BEDNARCZYK: I will give you a  
17 copy this afternoon or right after lunch.

18                   Third item, Dick or Bill, the  
19 website, this has been a topic, I know Dennis  
20 has brought this up a number of times in  
21 e-mails. We could go up to the website. And I  
22 think Bill raised this issue, a totally

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1 different topic, but once again, veterans on the  
2 website. If you go to your section of the  
3 website, we have our November minutes posted for  
4 the two days that we're here, but once again,  
5 there is still no indication of who is on the  
6 committee. There is nothing about the charter  
7 of the committee. I'm assuming all the  
8 organizations that are sitting here in the

9 gallery today would like to at least know who's  
10 who, and where they are from.

11 DR. METTERS: Cheryl came out with a  
12 letter, a photograph, and she wanted our names.

13 MR. BEDNARCZYK: I know this has been  
14 in the works. I guess the real question is,  
15 what is the delay, and who did we need to talk  
16 to while we're sitting here in D.C. to go talk  
17 to, the website.

18 MR. ELMORE: I'll start and then I  
19 will throw it to you for whatever detail you  
20 want to put into this. I'll try to explain  
21 bureaucracy a little bit. We do not -- no  
22 program office owns their website. It is the

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1 administration's website. So the process inside  
2 the agency is, there is a committee that has  
3 been formed to take a look at revamping the  
4 entire SBA website, not just our office.

5 MR. BEDNARCZYK: Hang on a second.  
6 Not to interrupt, but revamping a website is a  
7 major event. We're not asking for a major  
8 event. We're asking for a posting of a piece of  
9 information that could be contained on one web  
10 page. Is it possible to get the web person,  
11 while we're here, up here to talk to us?



12 DR. METTERS: Web master.

13 MR. BEDNARCZYK: I think what the  
14 problem is, from my point, talking with Dennis a  
15 number of times, Dennis's frustration right now  
16 is the fact that is not an issue we have raised  
17 once. We have raised it ten, 15 times, and we  
18 have all contributed information. There was the  
19 whole issue of filling out these little blurbs  
20 and everything else. I'm sorry. I do westbound  
21 pages all the time. It is a one-hour event for  
22 somebody to post this on the website.

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1 MR. SCHNEIDER: One of the things  
2 that the committee of the agency is doing is,  
3 actually, the last time I talked with that  
4 office, they are trying to reduce the amount of  
5 content that is actually out there. If everyone  
6 at that table had a piece that they wanted to  
7 contribute, my understanding in conversations,  
8 that wouldn't happen. They would want to shrink  
9 it down without significant critical  
10 information. Now that you're talking about  
11 links and things like that, that's different.  
12 MR. BEDNARCZYK: I am talking about  
13 this committee being recognized on the website.

14 My issue, as Dennis's issue, is there is a  
15 Senate Bill 1014 that is in progress, and it  
16 addresses this committee. And if I was a  
17 Senator, and I wanted to find this committee,  
18 where would I find it. The only place I would  
19 know to go is to the VA website, and I could not  
20 find anything about this committee, other than  
21 the set of minutes.

22                   And if my Senators in Connecticut

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1 wanted to contact me about the viability of this  
2 committee, and what he's looking for, and what  
3 he's going to be voting on, he would have to  
4 page through everything to find my name to be  
5 able to contact me.

6                   So I think the issue, even the  
7 veteran communities that we all represent from  
8 different parts of the country, there is no way  
9 to zero in on who we are, where we're from, and  
10 be able to get a communication going. We were  
11 formed, once again, last September is when we  
12 had our first organizational meeting, again. I  
13 would think that something like this should not  
14 take seven months, regardless of bureaucracy or  
15 whatever. Understanding revamping a website is  
16 a major event, we should make sure that we're  
17 built into, but it doesn't mean that we can't be

18 on it at this moment in time.

19                   MR. ELMORE: I will tell you and  
20 Dick, let's go back to the chair of that  
21 committee and one more time push, insist, let's  
22 get some information on our website about the

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1 committee. It's easy for me to say that. The  
2 reality is we don't manage that committee. I'm  
3 not trying to defend. I'm just trying to help  
4 you understand that, as frustrated as you all  
5 might get, there are things that we have to work  
6 through every day with everything that we do,  
7 and I'll give you an example, the Vet Gazette  
8 newspaper, which most people appreciate in life.  
9 We have to be certified to be able to continue  
10 to send the newsletter out that we have been  
11 sending out for five years.

12                   MR. SCHNEIDER: And we actually have  
13 to shrink it.

14                   MR. ELMORE: Yes, we have been  
15 ordered to shrink it. We can't do the ten or 15  
16 pages with detail. Now, we have to shrink it to  
17 four pages, and put a bunch of links in it.  
18 Those are the kinds of things. These orders and  
19 these processes come from the administration,  
20 which is why while we can push and we will push

21 again, regardless of the pushing, the decisions  
22 that are made, are sometimes driven by the

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1 administration's administrative vision of how  
2 agencies run.

3                   MR. BEDNARCZYK: I've got to say, if  
4 I may, the Vet Gazette, since you raised that as  
5 an issue. when does your membership read the Vet  
6 Gazette?

7                   MR. DOZIER: They have a hard time  
8 accessing that system. When you go into the SBA  
9 home page, there is nothing that says veteran.  
10 You have got to know to hit the program, drop it  
11 down, then you have got to know to drop it down  
12 before you get to the veterans page.

13                   There should be something there for  
14 veterans only. The committee has the report and  
15 minutes on it. You open the windows, and there  
16 is nothing on the committee, when their meetings  
17 are, very, very poor data on the committee. If  
18 I wanted to contact somebody, I don't know who  
19 to contact.

20                   MR. BEDNARCZYK: Mr. Golden, you  
21 represent Golden Thunder?

22                   MR. GOLDEN: Are you sure you wish to

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1 ask me? We're not known as the politically  
2 correct group. We find even after watching  
3 this, most of them, as SBA, is not of great  
4 threat or assistance to the veteran community.  
5 Obviously, by these internal meetings, you  
6 notice even a letter should have gone out last  
7 year that hadn't been sent, even the DOD, I mean  
8 DOE, Department of Defense. I have in my  
9 possession a letter from Ramos for them to do  
10 their one-year budget would cost them six  
11 billion dollars in contracts. They are saying  
12 that is I am practical, the very agency that  
13 creates my service disabled veterans.

14               To sit up here on a committee that  
15 should have some teeth, to be blunt, some go  
16 nuts, I find that you have been neutered and you  
17 are sitting here and taking it. I am bold, and  
18 it gives me time for a longer cigarette break,  
19 but these are our kids we're sending overseas.  
20 We're creating them on a daily basis. We're in  
21 Iraq, and you're going to create more veterans,  
22 my kids, and take more times with committees.

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1 I find this laughable, at the least. I find it  
2 inexcusable.

3 (Off The Record.)

4 MR. BEDNARCZYK: I was specifically  
5 asking the question about the organization.

6 MR. GOLDEN: We did use this before.  
7 We're finding a lot, even with the numbers, is  
8 double, triple counting from the SBA numbers.  
9 When you come out and put like you're doing a  
10 certain percentage for service disabled vets,  
11 these numbers are going from AA or other set  
12 asides, then you're going back through hard  
13 digging efforts to find out these kids or  
14 businesses are also veterans. And so you  
15 double, triple count these guys.

16 It doesn't hold water with us. And  
17 so we find the information rather painted,  
18 instead of the other way.

19 MR. BEDNARCZYK: Okay. Thank you.  
20 Anybody else like to talk?

21 I'm just looking for some outside  
22 support of Bill's issue. I am very concerned,

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1 as Bill's organization, publishing information  
2 outward to the veteran community, limiting and  
3 distributing our two issues that are big  
4 distribution, being held up because of  
5 bureaucracy and the information becoming  
6 outdated, and very important issues being

7 reduced to a page or two to satisfy some  
8 requirement. I think that causes difficulty,  
9 both for your organization and for this  
10 committee. Because more information, in my  
11 opinion, is better information, as long as it is  
12 good information. Sarah.

13 DR. ROGERS: The very reason I am  
14 here is because I couldn't find Bill Elmore. I  
15 was looking for information on the web. I am on  
16 the MOA, Military Officers of America Board of  
17 Directors. And I was digging around looking for  
18 information about all kinds of stuff about  
19 veterans businesses, because I believe that the  
20 370 plus thousand members that we have on there,  
21 and, of course, working with the military  
22 coalition for all veterans, that we should be

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1 more interested in veterans' businesses.

2 So I was digging around and I finally  
3 got through to the public affairs office of the  
4 SBA, and it happens that a wonderful gentleman  
5 there happened to know Bill Elmore. He said,  
6 "Well, let me give you his number."

7 So I called him, still not knowing  
8 who in the world he was, and finally, I'm  
9 digging through the website while I'm talking to

10 him. I have been looking through this for a  
11 good week. I am a pretty good web surfer, you  
12 know, get a doctorate, you get pretty good at  
13 it. I find his picture buried in there, and it  
14 says who he is. And I realize I'm terribly  
15 sorry, I should be talking to somebody on your  
16 staff. He said, "That would be a little hard to  
17 do. There's only a couple of us."

18                   That's when I found out about how  
19 difficult it was to find the information on  
20 there, and consequently, become involved with  
21 this body here. And Bill's made a great start  
22 in here, but I do think that publicity is a key

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1 piece here.  
2                   Now, if we can't solve the  
3 bureaucracy of that, one of the things that we  
4 need to do as veterans, I think, in my humble  
5 opinion, is get the word out through our own  
6 venues of how to find this, and then go pepper  
7 the public affairs office here with e-mails  
8 saying, I can't find my veterans business  
9 office. I can find everything in the world  
10 about women-owned small businesses, can't find a  
11 damn thing -- excuse me. I can't find anything  
12 about veteran-owned businesses. And you're  
13 right, we don't want to cloud veteran



14 women-owned, veteran disabled, are you also  
15 veteran AA HUB zone. Let's just make it veteran  
16 since you can find it. That's my opinion.

17               But I think the best way we get our  
18 Congressmen or our legislators is by sending  
19 e-mails to them. We use our MOA website all the  
20 time that way. It is not hung up in the mail.  
21 If we use the e-mail venue for the Small  
22 Business Administration, Hector does listen. I

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1 have only seen him the one time when he came to  
2 talk to the committee last time, but his public  
3 affairs office will listen if they get 100,000  
4 e-mails saying I can't find information about  
5 veteran businesses. That's my suggestion.

6               MS. PAYNE: That's a good point that  
7 the procurement committee brought up last time  
8 is the fact that we have to tie up with MOA even  
9 better, to get it out faster. If SBA won't put  
10 us on there, why don't we ask you to put us on  
11 yours. We could get that done real quick, and  
12 let SBA catch up. Nothing against SBA, but the  
13 bios are there.

14               MR. GOLDEN: We have never linked to  
15 the SBA. That would take something even I would  
16 debate over but, yes, we could post the

17 information, anything you want to put out, in  
18 under a week.

19 MR. DOZIER: We do, but we had  
20 veterans call with so many complaints about not  
21 being able to find information on the site.

22 MR. BEDNARCZYK: If we could arrange

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1 for someone that has some knowledge of the  
2 website to come today, we could certainly -- by  
3 3:00, in particular, it seems to be kind of an  
4 open time for us this afternoon.

5 MR. SCHNEIDER: Cheryl is pursuing  
6 that right now.

7 MR. BEDNARCZYK: We could get right  
8 down to the developer's side.

9 MR. SCHNEIDER: If I could ask Sarah  
10 a question, as you were surfing the SBA website,  
11 the problem you had with our particular site,  
12 did you have a similar problem with any other  
13 program offices, be it procurement, GCBD, the  
14 loan programs, or was it just the veterans site?

15 DR. ROGERS: Just the veterans site.  
16 The other stuff, I could pretty well find.

17 MR. ELMORE: If I can try to address  
18 this issue, do this, so you will understand a  
19 little of the history, I am not trying to

20 defend. We're beholding by the process as well.  
21 Two or three years ago, we had a flying flag on  
22 a front page, and one day that flag was gone.

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1 DR. ROGERS: That's just about the  
2 time I found your site.

3 MR. ELMORE: And when I followed up  
4 to ask what happened, I never got what I  
5 considered an adequate explanation.

6 MR. BEDNARCZYK: I want to show  
7 everybody how it operates.

8 MR. ELMORE: I personally welcome  
9 some dialogue between our committee on how we  
10 make the veterans program back where it should  
11 be, recognizable when you first open up the SBA  
12 page so you can find what we do offer as easily  
13 and quickly as possible. I will leave it at  
14 that.

15 DR. METTERS: As a segue or follow on  
16 to what you talked about, these two things go  
17 hand in hand. Not only do we have a difficulty  
18 with that, I think if we were to get this  
19 solved, we would solve a lot of other problems.

20 One that I am going back to now, we  
21 have been in business two years, two sessions.  
22 Guys, we still have people out in the public

1 domain in cyberspace who does not know that we  
2 exist. And I've been struggling with Bill and  
3 Tim Lay to find out how we can change that.  
4 Maybe we could take the lead and put out just a  
5 newsletter, if we had someone who is inclined to  
6 do something like that. But I think the  
7 fundamental problem we have, in our charter,  
8 they say we report to the President and  
9 Congress. Yet everything we do is vetted or  
10 screened by the SBA.

11           And I think another problem we have  
12 is our name itself starts off with the SBA  
13 Veterans Advisory Committee. If you would start  
14 off with the veterans SBA advisory committee,  
15 maybe the word would get out. But it makes me  
16 sad when I go around and I see these young guys  
17 starting up saying, "Hey, I'd like to start my  
18 business." "Do you know about the advisory  
19 committee?" "Never heard anything about it."  
20 So the web page could do wonders. And if we do  
21 it, I would hope it's not hidden under SBA, and  
22 you have to paginate all the way down. Some way

1 you should link over and get it.

2                   MR. BEDNARCZYK: I'm with you a  
3 hundred percent, from my perspective. And  
4 that's why I think it's important while we're  
5 here in Washington, I think since the  
6 re-institution of this committee last September,  
7 we have now given seven months to the SBA  
8 website organizational -- whether its committee  
9 or individual to get us posted, to get us on  
10 there to do that, part of our marketing, if you  
11 will, and that hadn't happened. While we're  
12 here in session, we'll have them. But I also  
13 want to point out, as much as you were happy  
14 that you got an increase, if I read this  
15 correctly, you went from a budget of \$741,000 to  
16 \$743,000 so you gained \$2,000. If we were to do  
17 any kind of marketing as a committee, I would  
18 say that the only hope we have is the website to  
19 do it both efficiently and cost effectively,  
20 because there isn't money for publication of  
21 anything.

22                   DR. METTERS: Yes, that's true.

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1 Also, I wanted to add onto that, Bill is doing a  
2 wonderful job but we have got to realize Bill  
3 can only do so much. Even when you mentioned  
4 Hector, there is only so much that he can do. I  
5 guess we jump on him because he's here and

6 easily available, but guys that we need to be  
7 talking to is a step or two higher than he,  
8 because he just doesn't have the resources,  
9 wherewithal, to do it. But Bill, when we come  
10 at you, I hope you're not taking this  
11 personally.

12                   MR. ELMORE: I will be as responsive  
13 as I can be. I'm proud of the work that my  
14 office does, and I'm proud of what I believe are  
15 significant outcomes over the last three, four,  
16 five years with veterans and development with  
17 all of our programs.

18                   At the same time, I am not always so  
19 proud of the structure and the bureaucracy that  
20 we have to work through because, especially as a  
21 guy who came from outside of Government, pretty  
22 burdensome, ineffective, frustrating, all the

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1 stuff that you guys talked about.

2                   The fact that something on our  
3 website disappears overnight and I didn't even  
4 know it's going to happen, I find real  
5 bothersome. And I raised those points, but at  
6 the same time, I don't run the administration,  
7 and I don't mean just the administrator because  
8 everything that SBA does or doesn't do, to some

9 degree, is a part of the administration's plan  
10 for Government, and I'll leave it at that.  
11 Otherwise, I am getting into territory I  
12 shouldn't. I don't take it as a personal  
13 attack, if this is what the unity needs more of,  
14 then I have got to push more with my limited  
15 resources to try to get these things done.

16 MR. BEDNARCZYK: I do want to go back  
17 to the website, as soon as we get this turned  
18 up. One thing I want to point out, the recent  
19 Senate Bill 1014 is important because it does,  
20 if I understand it correctly, provide you with  
21 some additional funds.

22 MR. ELMORE: I tried not to read it.

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1 DR. METTERS: You said 2000.  
2 I thought you were facing 200,000.  
3 MR. BEDNARCZYK: Just to close this  
4 piece out, we were talking about the website.  
5 First of all, if you notice, there's really two  
6 areas that a veteran would have to look for.  
7 No. 1, is the pull down menu. If you notice,  
8 you pull down the menu and here's what appears  
9 first. There is the section for veterans, but  
10 it's on the bottom. This is what actually  
11 happens. You pull down, and as you can see it

12 is alphabetical but you need to slow down to the  
13 very bottom before you hit veteran.

14 DR. ROGERS: Click on resources up  
15 above.

16 MR. BEDNARCZYK: I'm going to do that  
17 in a second.

18 The other is, up here where it says  
19 resources, once again, it is in alphabetical  
20 order. Veterans winds up at the bottom. The  
21 links will take you to the same place. This is  
22 Bill's page. And here's our minutes from the

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1 15th and 16th, but once again, here's services  
2 to help veteran programs, veteran news.

3 MR. DOZIER: If you look down there  
4 at reports, third from the bottom, there is your  
5 reports, but whose reports, from who.

6 MR. BEDNARCZYK: Right, that is the  
7 main point here.

8 MR. DOZIER: There is your annual  
9 report from 2004. That's the last one that was  
10 out.

11 MR. BEDNARCZYK: Then as you come  
12 back here, as you come down the page here,  
13 you've got the office for contract assistance  
14 for veteran business owners, which takes you to  
15 this page which has a lot more information, as



16 you can see, but that reference link doesn't  
17 really entice you to click on it to get you to  
18 this page where you have now here frequently  
19 asked questions. And then this is just about  
20 how to get a PDF or whatever the case may be.

21                   So your website is sparsely  
22 populated, I think, to say the least, and when

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1 it comes to identifying this committee, once  
2 again, now if the veteran getting to the website  
3 doesn't know to click these two areas, if he  
4 types up here -- can you type veteran, what  
5 happens, it doesn't take him to that page. What  
6 it does, it takes him out on the web, and he  
7 gets access to tons of information which is not  
8 what he is looking for. He is looking for SBA  
9 information.

10                   MS. ROGERS: That's where I went.

11                   MS. PAYNE: And got totally  
12 frustrated.

13                   MR. BEDNARCZYK: For the record,  
14 state your name?

15                   MR. KELLY: My name is Lewis Kelly,  
16 president of the Northeast Business Resource  
17 Center. I wasn't going to bring it up until  
18 later, but this is an opportunity to do that. I

19 heard Dr. Metters and Rogers talk about  
20 marketing and advertising, and even in  
21 Government, you have to run your organization as  
22 if it were a small business, which is really why

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1 you're here.  
2                   I heard Dr. Metters talk about  
3 renaming this particular committee, and in doing  
4 so, by putting the word "veterans" first, as you  
5 can see what that would do is bring you up at a  
6 much higher hit rate at Google. If you were  
7 looking at veterans business, one of the 437  
8 pages later, you would find your way to this  
9 committee, based on the way you have structured  
10 your names.

11                   There are lots of different things,  
12 and I have some notes that I would be happy to  
13 address later, but this is a per example, an  
14 opportunity to kind of highlight just a little  
15 bit about what you were talking about and why  
16 that's important.

17                   MR. BEDNARCZYK: You're absolutely  
18 right. Ron.

19                   DR. METTERS: What would we have to  
20 do, would we have to go back to Congress?

21                   MR. ELMORE: The administrator can't  
22 change the name, because in the statute, that's

1 where it get its name. You all had a discussion  
2 about some legislation that I am trying not to  
3 read.

4                   MR. KELLY: We would still be  
5 associated with you. Could you institute a  
6 d/b/a?

7                   MR. ELMORE: I don't think you can,  
8 in the sense that it's a statuted committee.  
9 And we will get into a whole issue of SBA rules  
10 and regulations, but the whole advisory process.

11                  MR. KELLY: If you name your website  
12 what you want to name it, that will satisfy your  
13 problem, and then the real naming can come  
14 later.

15                  MR. ELMORE: We're going to have  
16 somebody from our web committee in here later  
17 today, and if you all want to provide them a  
18 specific recommendation, we could do that. We  
19 will support it, as long as they can do that  
20 within the constraints of how we operate through  
21 our SOPs. I don't see why you couldn't, from  
22 our page, and perhaps even Teresa's page. A lot

1 of what is on Teresa's pages is on various parts  
2 of our page, but you do have to go click on the  
3 side. The frequently asked questions, we put  
4 that together when we first put the rules out in  
5 '04.

6 DR. METTERS: Can I just mention  
7 this: Does anyone in here know if the National  
8 Veterans Business Development's board of  
9 directors, what outfit is that associated with?  
10 What I'm trying to say here is they said better  
11 known as the Veterans Corporation. Now, who  
12 would know national veterans is reference to the  
13 Veterans Corporation. So what the Veterans  
14 Corporation did is they poo-poo this thing,  
15 Veterans Corporation.

16 SBA in some areas is a good word, and  
17 in other worlds, like Katrina and those areas,  
18 they are at the bottom of the list. When they  
19 see SBA, you turn off people. Now, did they go  
20 to Congress to do that. I know the official  
21 name of the Veterans Corporation is the National  
22 Veterans Business Development Corporation, but

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1 all this says is the Veterans Corporation.

2 MR. ZOLA: I'm pretty sure there are  
3 non-profits. It is legitimate for non-profits

4 to use d/b/a's also.

5                   MR. ELMORE: It is specifically set  
6 up in the statute as an independent agency.  
7 There was an effort to carry it on for a couple  
8 years for the administration about whether or  
9 not it was a federally-owned entity, and that  
10 was clarified in the '04 legislation. I believe  
11 it was.

12                   DR. METTERS: It is similar to the  
13 federally funded research.

14                   MR. ELMORE: Let me make a point,  
15 take a note, and let's ask our office that deals  
16 with all of the advisory committees if there is  
17 a way of process to represent the committee in a  
18 some sort of a name change. I don't know that  
19 there is or isn't. My guess is there is not,  
20 but we'll certainly ask.

21                   DR. METTERS: I think that the  
22 Veterans Corporation did something like that.

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1                   MR. BEDNARCZYK: I'd like to bring  
2 this part to a close.

3                   MR. ZOLA: I haven't changed the  
4 other websites, but while we have this person  
5 here about our website, the protocol, has anyone  
6 looked under the VA or the veterans department

7 of the Department of Labor to see if they link?  
8 And I don't know what the protocol is, whether  
9 it's wise, because everybody who is a veteran is  
10 obviously going to be have a website for  
11 something.

12                   So I think in this issue of outreach,  
13 of our making the opportunities that the SBA  
14 affords, maybe looking at making sure we're  
  
15 linked with the VA, because again, I think  
16 people are looking. That was my question.

17                   MR. ST. JOHN: My name's Bruce St.  
18 John of the VA. I am 99 percent sure we have  
19 links from the Center of Veterans Tours. I  
20 would bet there is no link to "vet.gov" top  
21 three levels to your website. Getting changes  
22 to the "va.gov" websites, that takes more than

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1 an act of Congress. It took us four years to  
2 get a link from "va.gov" to  
3 "veteranbusiness.gov." The link really is from  
4 "veteranbusiness.gov" to SBA. If you would like  
5 us to add links, let us know, if you see a page  
6 that you feel like there is a link.

7                   So I hope that answer the question.

8                   MR. BEDNARCZYK: Thank you. I didn't  
9 want to use this time to re-design the web page

10 and all, but I thought it's something that at  
11 3:00 this afternoon, we could get a little bit  
12 deeper into, and use our collective experiences  
13 to help advise on making some changes. But  
14 there's some fundamental issues that need to be  
15 addressed on this website that we need to  
16 finally lock in on.

17 DR. METTERS: If Dennis was here,  
18 we'd still be in there because that is one of  
19 his favorite subjects.

20 MR. BEDNARCZYK: It is. I'd like to  
21 suggest at this time we will take a 20-minute  
22 break. We will reconvene at 11:00. And Joe

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1 Zobota should be here by then.

2 MR. ELMORE: It is going to be Joe,  
3 Dick and I. When I chatted with Joe, I believe  
4 it was yesterday or Friday, he was going to come  
5 to the last 15 minute part. I don't know if  
6 he'll be here for the 45 minutes.

7 MR. BEDNARCZYK: Does he have a  
8 problem with the hour?

9 MR. ELMORE: I don't know if he has a  
10 problem or not, mostly in the sense he has an  
11 office he works in. He has some other  
12 obligations.

13 MR. BEDNARCZYK: All right. We will

14 reconvene at 11:00.

15 (Short Recess.)

16 MR. BEDNARCZYK: Okay. I'd like to  
17 call this meeting back to order. First on our  
18 agenda, we have Susan ROSS from the Philadelphia  
19 Chamber of Commerce.

20 MS. ROSSOMANDO: Thank you, very  
21 much.

22 MR. ELMORE: Can I do just a touch

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1 and introduce Susan, and I don't really know  
2 her, other than having chatted on the phone. I  
3 saw in December a press release where the  
4 Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce had  
5 created a special program for veterans. I knew  
6 they had done it, and I knew that was  
7 significant because I have done some work with  
8 the National Chamber of Commerce on a number of  
9 issues, and I was really pleased to see it.  
10 And it turned out that one of the gentlemen that  
11 I served with has been working with you.

12 MS. ROSSOMANDO: Yes, exactly.

13 MR. ELMORE: So Joe sent me an e-mail  
14 wanted to introduce me to Susan last week.

15 MS. ROSSOMANDO: Yes, it was last  
16 Wednesday.



17                   MR. ELMORE:  So I responded to Joe,  
18 and ultimately to Susan.  We chatted and I found  
19 out she was going to be here in town, and I  
20 thought, what a wonderful opportunity for her to  
21 be able to share with you what she's done, and  
22 through that, perhaps where she thinks all this

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1 may go.

2                   MS. ROSSOMANDO:  Exactly.  Well,  
3 first, I wanted to say good afternoon.  And  
4 thank you, very much.  I wanted to, again, thank  
5 Bill for inviting me to come here today and  
6 present to you, as well as the rest of the  
7 advisory committee, for me to tell you a little  
8 bit more information about a program that, as  
9 Bill mentioned, we recently rolled out in the  
10 greater Philadelphia area.

11                   Tracy will be on the call.  Again,  
12 the program is Vetwork Your Business.  And  
13 before I get into the background on the concept  
14 and how it was initially created by a chamber of  
15 commerce, the program itself, I really wanted to  
16 go into the objectives.  Cheryl, if you don't  
17 mind.

18                   These are the primary objectives of  
19 the Vetwork Your Business program.  As many of  
20 you are veterans yourselves and business owners,

21 and obviously involved with the Small Business  
22 Administration, the No. 1 objective of the

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1 Vetwork Your Business Program is really to  
2 increase the number of veteran-owned businesses  
3 as well.

4           As you know, many veterans are  
5 unaware of the business opportunities available  
6 to them, and as a result, they are not  
7 registered in the CCR the central contracting  
8 registry. There is information within your  
9 packets on this, and I can, obviously, answer  
10 questions as we go.

11           This is really the primary source for  
12 large corporations such as Lockheed Martin as  
13 well as government agencies, to locate potential  
14 suppliers who are service disabled vets.  
15 Without being registered, a lot of them are  
16 missing out on these opportunities.

17           The way I am presenting, as we want  
18 to uncamouflage those vets. We want to build  
19 that awareness, tell them by merely registering,  
20 that is taking the first step to finding  
21 opportunity for contracts within, again,  
22 Government agencies as well as large, prime

1 contractors.

2           Two, we not only want to identify  
3 these veterans, but we want to educate them,  
4 provide them with networking opportunities that  
5 better qualify them to do business with  
6 companies such as Lockheed Martin, as well as  
7 corporations that I'm going to talk about as we  
8 go through the presentation. And then, finally,  
9 we want to establish a pipeline of qualified and  
10 industry segmented veterans for our membership.

11           As I mentioned previously, my name is  
12 Susan Ross. I am the manager of project  
13 development at the Greater Philadelphia Chamber  
14 of Commerce. We're actually lead by the former  
15 governor of Pennsylvania, Mark Zuicher. He is  
16 our CEO. We're the fifth largest chamber in the  
  
17 United States, just as a point of reference. We  
18 have 5,500 members. We help 175,000 employees  
19 throughout the greater Philadelphia area. Not  
20 only do we cover Philadelphia, we also cover the  
21 surrounding counties, as well as southern New  
22 Jersey and northern Delaware. So we're a

1 tri-state chamber.

2 Philadelphia is the fourth largest  
3 market in the United States of America. Just to  
4 give you a background about how the program came  
5 to be, back in June, I actually had a  
6 conversation with one of Tracy's colleagues,  
7 Regina Stout. She is the manager of supplier  
8 diversity at Lockheed Martin. She's sits on a  
9 panel that we rolled out last June called the  
10 supplier network program. That program is  
11 geared towards small businesses. We work with  
  
12 the SBA on that, the regional SBA. That's a  
13 curriculum that was developed by the procurement  
14 officers of 25 large corporations throughout the  
15 greater Pennsylvania area. It is an educational  
16 program that spans four weeks where small  
17 businesses come and learn of the various  
18 opportunities, as well as the tools necessary to  
19 better qualify themselves to do business with  
20 large corporations. And after that committee  
21 meeting, I was just having a side conversation  
22 with Regina, and I said, "Regina, as such a

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1 large supplier what is challenge you encounter  
2 on day-to-day basis?"

3 She said, Sue, is there is anything  
4 that you can do to find service disabled

5 veterans, please, something that the chamber  
6 could possibly do."

7           My role with the chamber is project  
8 development. What I do is actually consult with  
9 our large corporate members, such as Lockheed  
10 Martin, Commerce Bank, and basically uncover  
11 their needs and develop programming.

12           That got me to thinking. The first  
13 thing that I did is contacted the local SBA, our  
14 regional SBA, and I spoke with Joe McDevitt, who  
15 is the local contractor, local gentleman that  
16 handles business affairs. And I said, "Lockheed  
17 Martin has expressed this need to have any other  
18 information." He said, "This is something we're  
19 really working on." As well as I contacted a  
20 couple of our other larger suppliers. They  
21 expressed a need in locating qualified service  
22 disabled vets, as well as veteran business

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1 owners.

2           I reached out to the southeast  
3 Pennsylvania small business development centers  
4 as well as the procurement technical assistance  
5 program in our area. We decided there needed to  
6 be a cohesive message. We wanted to have a  
7 one-stop shop. I heard someone say that when I  
8 was sitting in here earlier. That's really what

9 we want to provide, a one-stop shop for all the  
10 veteran business owner and service disabled vets  
11 as well as entrepreneurs thinking of going into  
12 business with all of the opportunities available  
13 to them.

14               So we entered in a strategic alliance  
15 with the Small Business Administration in the  
16 greater Philadelphia area. That was the first  
17 step to really delivering this cohesive message.  
18 Lockheed Martin, we were very pleased because  
19 Tracy, she took this on a concept, and I think  
20 that's a really big testament to the company  
21 themselves.

22               We can't prove necessarily that this

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1 will work, but as I go through the program  
2 itself, you will see that really gained a lot of  
3 momentum since July when Lockheed Martin came on  
4 board as sponsors of the program.

5               The cornerstone of the Vetwork  
6 program is really the communications sessions.  
7 We developed an advisory group that works with  
8 me. Within that advisory group, we have both  
9 representatives from the SBA, a gentleman from  
10 the small business development center, as well  
11 as Regina Stout, to the supervisor diversity

12 manager. And what we decided we needed to do is  
13 provide a community session on a quarterly  
14 basis, and that is marketed as a snapshot for  
15 veteran business owners. It is free to the  
16 public.

17 I will later get into how we market  
18 this to gain attention, but we had our very  
19 first communications session on January 11th.  
20 We were very pleased we had 37 veteran business  
21 owners attend that program. Of those 37, only  
22 nine of them were registered in the central

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1 contracting registry. So as we move forward,  
2 what we're doing is tracking to insure that  
3 those people that were not there at the  
4 communications session, they learn how to do  
5 that, and we're making sure that they go forward  
6 and actually register in the CCR.

7 So at that program, again, what we do  
8 is more or less a panel discussion. The SBA  
9 talks about what programs that they offer. SBA  
10 talks about what programs they offer, as well as  
11 the primes, Lockheed Martin, talks about, one,  
12 why should a company register in the CCR. Some  
13 say I am not necessarily doing business with the  
14 Government, why should I register in the CCR.  
15 We talked about the fact, if you are not

16 registered there, that is where they look to  
17 find potential suppliers.

18               We also had a keynote speaker  
19 because, as you know, that is a great way to  
20 drive attendance to the program. We were very  
21 pleased. Not only did we receive media coverage  
22 at that program with the local NBCA program, but

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1 the program spans for about two-and-a-half  
2 hours. In the final half hour, Susan Lawrence  
3 came, or General Lawrence, came and actually  
4 addressed the group. She gave them kudos for  
5 stepping up and being veteran business owners,  
6 and also briefed them on some of the current  
7 situations on the war in Iraq. I think that was  
8 a nice way to culminate the program and finish  
9 it off.

10               Our next communication session will  
11 be held on March 28th. Again, those are the  
12 cornerstones. As I mentioned previously, not  
13 only do we want to identify these veterans, but  
14 we really do want to educate them. Because a  
15 lot of veteran business owners, what we're  
16 finding, some of them are looking in various  
17 presentation skills, and those types of things  
18 that we have learned from Regina Stout. She's



19 great, from Lockheed. She's really assisted in  
20 helping us to develop the curriculum.

21               First, that we send through them the  
22 Philly supplier network program. Typically, as I

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1 had mentioned, this is the program that started  
2 back in January of 2005. Currently, we have 100  
3 small businesses going through that program.  
4 Really, what it is, an opportunity to educate  
5 these small businesses on anything from  
6 financing for growth to presenting,  
7 understanding the contract process. A lot of  
8 small business owners that we have encountered  
9 have gone through this program don't understand  
10 that to get into Lockheed Martin, it might take  
11 a three-year time period. We're trying to  
12 educate them to better qualify them.

13               Also, it is the networking. At the  
14 end of the program, they have the opportunity to  
15 meet one-on-one with the procurement officers of  
16 27 large corporations throughout the greater  
17 Philadelphia area. In addition to the supplier  
18 network that typically is a \$250 enrollment fee,  
19 we're so submitted to the Vetwork Program, that  
20 we have provided that a free program for all  
21 veteran business owners that go through the  
22 program as well as providing discounted

1 membership with the Philadelphia Chamber of  
2 Commerce, because we're committed to providing  
3 them with the necessary tools.

4           In addition to the general supplier  
5 network, which is for all small businesses, we  
6 do have a Vetwork specific curriculum which  
7 occurs three times per year, from exactly what  
8 is service disabled, how do I become service  
9 disabled, to a panel discussion with successful  
10 veteran business owners and kind of a  
11 testimonial, this is how I did it, well, this is  
12 what worked with us, and a Q & A session.  
13 Yet another networking component because I think  
14 that is important, and lot of people may lose  
15 sight of the importance of the relationship  
16 building because, obviously, being a qualified  
17 business owner, I think that a lot of large  
18 prime contractors say I'm going to give you  
19 business. And, obviously, I would prefer you to  
20 be veteran or service disabled vet, but if  
21 you're not a qualified business owner, it is  
22 neither here or there as well.

1                   So we do have a greater Philadelphia  
2 Chamber of Commerce expose. We're working with  
3 the SBA on this, on and May 16th, to 100  
4 exhibitors, 100 large corporations are the  
5 exhibitors, and they are the only people who  
6 will exhibit, and then the attendees are  
7 basically all small business owners throughout  
8 the greater Philadelphia area. We're expecting  
9 about 1,000 attendees to come to the program,  
10 and that is yet another business benefit where  
11 veteran business owners, where they will receive  
12 a discounted admission to that program.

13                   One unique aspect of the program, we  
14 will feature a Lockheed Martin veterans  
15 pavilion. We'll have on-site CCR registration,  
16 which with the help of the SBA in greater  
17 Philadelphia, we're going to be setting up  
18 computers. We'll be basically marketing that  
19 outwardly so people do understand what they need  
20 to bring with them prior to coming in order to  
21 get started on the process. And they do up have  
22 to 30 days to complete that process. So while

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1 there may be some veterans that actually  
2 complete the CCR registration that day, we're  
3 getting the wheel in motion and helping them  
4 out. And I think that's definitely a unique

5 component. We'll have a break out session where  
6 we're working with -- if anyone's familiar with  
7 the Veterans Base Journal. That is a very  
8 wonderful publication. I met with their  
9 publisher yesterday, Chris Hale, and we're  
10 getting them to speak.

11       Veteran specific networking, we're going to  
12 host that on a bi-yearly or twice a year basis,  
13 inviting any large company or Government agency  
14 in the region that has an interest in regaining  
15 service owners in our region. And they can come  
16 to the chamber and network with them. That is  
17 the education component.

18               The next slide, please. Many of you,  
19 again, as veteran business owners and veterans  
20 yourself, you may have a question as to your  
21 chamber of commerce, how are you going to go  
22 about building this awareness. And one thing

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1 that I think that utilized a chamber as  
2 centralized, we have an opportunity to foster  
3 relationships that we have in both public and  
4 private sectors. First, just as an active  
5 volunteer for the USO of Southern New Jersey and  
6 Pennsylvania, so I know a lot about the veteran  
7 community and I understand the unity that is

8 among the groups, and it is grass roots  
9 outreach. One veteran, if they understand the  
10 importance of understanding of CCR, they can  
11 talk to a friend and involve a colleague. And  
12 we're also working with our Union League Armed  
13 Forces Committee, to name a couple.  
14 Basically, they build awareness within their  
15 memberships.

16                   I have been invited to do  
  
17 presentations such as this within their  
18 organizations, which has been a very helpful  
19 vehicle for us. They also send the  
20 communication, the communication sessions, to  
21 the board of directors as well as to their  
22 membership. Then legislators, obviously,

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1 getting involved with various legislators is  
2 just helpful in building that awareness. Not  
3 only does it lend credibility but also provides  
4 access to their constituents. Right now, we  
5 have received support from Pennsylvania State  
6 Senator Robert Tomlinson. You will see a press  
7 release from him in the packet that I provided.  
8 We're working with U.S. Congressman Michael  
9 Fitzpatrick. I am meeting with his press  
10 secretary since I am in D.C..

11                   What we're interested in doing is  
12 building that awareness with them as well as the  
13 county which is in the Philadelphia region.  
14 They have supported the initiative, anywhere  
15 from sending a press release which has gotten  
16 picked up. I think that's how Bill first heard  
17 about it because that was the press release from  
18 Senator Tomlinson to providing information in  
19 the e-mail, newsletters, websites, given  
20 opportunities to speak committee meetings.  
21 Again legislators are key.

22                   Corporations, the chambers membership

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1 is comprised 80 percent small businesses and 20  
2 percent large businesses. We utilize our  
3 corporate members, for instance, Lockheed Martin  
4 in working -- they have actually reached out to  
5 their existing vendor to provide them with the  
6 information on Vetwork your business, all of our  
7 supporting companies for our supplier network  
8 program which you have a list up, and I will  
9 provide, they also are reaching internally sort  
10 of the low hanging fruit. A lot of them may  
11 have vendors that are veterans.

12                   Again, the chambers memberships. We  
13 have 5,500 members, and within that membership,  
14 we have already identified in the last few weeks

15 12 that have come and registered in the CCR, in  
16 the last two weeks alone, which is very  
17 exciting.

18               We sent a survey out to our members  
19 but we developed a survey basing to  
20 veteran-owned business owner: Do you have any  
21 clearances, which is extremely important,  
22 because a lot of people don't know that that's

99

1 important.

2               And then press and media. As  
3 everyone knows, we were on the news for the  
4 communication session that got calls in. We  
5 have established a hot line at the chamber that  
6 is specific to veteran business owners so they  
7 can call and get information. We have a  
8 strategy in place where we follow-up with all  
9 those calls and tell them about the program  
10 itself. We're going to be tracking each time we  
11 show up in the media, and I think that's  
12 extremely important.

13               That is our outreach strategy, and  
14 that leads me into the marketing efforts.  
15 Obviously, we understand, and to be honest, I  
16 think the core component of the program is the  
17 grass roots outreach. However, you have to have

18 some sort of marketing plan in place. With the  
19 assistance of the funding from sponsors, we were  
20 able to embark upon a very comprehensive  
21 marketing campaign. If you have the opportunity  
22 to go to our website listed in our my

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1 information, it is one of the links on our home  
2 page, our veterans survey, so people happen upon  
3 it when they are going on our website, which is  
4 nice.

5           Again, we did send an e-mail out to  
6 all of our members as well as some of the  
7 veteran service organizations that we're working  
8 with. Adds in various publications and  
9 newsletters, again, Veterans Business Journal,  
10 we're working with them.

11           In addition to niche publications  
12 such as West Point Society Magazine, we have  
13 taken out on ad. The ad is in the packet that I  
14 have provided to you. Our membership directory,  
15 we have a full page ad that will be coming out  
16 as well as the greater Philadelphia story which  
17 is a relocation guide. A lot of people will ask  
18 for that. We put an ad in that as well.

19           Our website is in process right now,  
20 I saw it before I left, it is going to be going



21 live in the next two weeks. That is a real  
22 exciting vehicle. Not only is it important for

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1 the prime contractors, but also for the  
2 veterans. They can search via service disabled  
3 veteran owned business, those are all things  
4 accessible to the primes. In addition, we're  
5 also having a bulletin board. So like the SBA  
6 is going to provide their information on there,  
7 and it is a very comprehensive site, again, a  
8 message to our body which is comprised of 112  
9 large, corporate, C level leaders.

10               We have presented to the board of  
11 directors, our president has mentioned this  
12 program several times. We have our next board  
13 meeting on Thursday. He is going to be talking  
14 about me presenting here, so that's exciting.

15               Again, I thank you, and a message to  
16 our membership, those are our comprehensive  
17 marketing efforts. And, finally, I'm sure that  
18 everyone is sort of asking themselves how would  
19 you benchmark your success. This is sort of a  
20 very, I guess, ameba like program because you  
21 are not sure how much success you have. It is  
22 hard to be able to say that. So the CCR

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1 numbers, numbers speak for themselves. What my  
2 interest is when we first began this research  
3 back in June, there were 111 service disabled  
4 veterans registered in the CCR. As of the  
5 morning before I came here, there were 221  
6 registered in the Pennsylvania. I can attribute  
7 specifically 17 companies that we have  
8 attracted, but it is quite possible there are a  
9 lot of people that may have heard about it.  
10 What we're planning on doing, everyone that  
11 attends our communication session, everyone that  
12 inquires about the program, we're tracking their  
13 information. And I have an intern that works  
14 with me. What she does every couple weeks, I  
15 ask her for a report, and I say, I'd like to  
16 know if any of these people have shown up in the  
17 CCR. That's how we're going to be taking a look  
18 at our year over year increase. The veterans in  
19 the service disabled vet, that supplier network  
20 program, the program has gained attention from  
21 the Philadelphia Inquirer as a small business  
22 initiative, but I think Vetwork without the

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1 supplier network and without education in place,  
2 the awareness would occur but education would

3 not.

4               We really are going to be able to  
5 attract those veterans that have gone through  
6 our program and the graduates of that program.  
7 Again, success testimonials. Working with  
8 Lockheed Martin, I know Regina's had an  
9 opportunity to meet with a couple of these  
10 veterans that we have encountered throughout the  
11 program. I would like to be able, if I was  
12 invited back or something like that, I would  
13 like to be able to say next year, these are some  
14 success stories. These are vets that made an  
15 impact with a prime contractor, and this is a  
16 story from one of our large corporations that  
17 actually awarded a contract to one of the  
18 Vetwork business owners, and put that in some  
19 sort of newsletter and again media coverage.

20              We plan on tracking, again, as I  
21 mentioned. Every single time that we show up,  
22 we have a press service that is taking any press

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1 clips any time I was actually interviewed by our  
2 public radio, WHYY, I was on that, they actually  
3 came to our communications session.

4              Again, it is just building that  
5 awareness because I think the more that we  
6 uncamouflage those veterans, the more we show

7 there are people that appreciate the service and  
8 provide them with the opportunities. It is key.  
9 So that's the way we plan to benchmark our  
10 success.

11                   Finally, I'd like to put up a list.  
12 As you see, with the assistance of Lockheed  
13 Martin, we wouldn't be able to do the other  
14 programs. They are supporters of our supplier  
15 network program, and they have committed not  
16 only will they meet face to face at our various  
17 networking opportunities, they also provide  
18 their contact information to the veteran  
19 business owners. This isn't just a general  
20 website. It is their personal phone number,  
21 name of a person, and their personal e-mail.

22                   That is basically what I'd like to

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1 share with you initially today. All of this  
2 information is in the packet that I have.  
3 Really one thing that we really want to talk  
4 about is chambers of commerce are excellent  
5 vehicles to centralize this type of information.  
6 Our goal moving forward is to establish keys to  
7 success with this program as sort of a framework  
8 and roll it out throughout other metropolitan  
9 areas within the United States. Because there

10 are a lot of components of that, that are pretty  
11 easy to replicate. We're in talks with the New  
12 Castle County Chamber of Commerce in Delaware.  
13 They are fairly close to us. And, again, we are  
14 going to kind of use them as a prototype, but if  
15 any regions that you might come from that you  
16 think this might be of interest to share with  
17 your chamber of commerce, obviously, my contact  
18 information is in this packet of information.  
19 It is something you would be so surprised how  
20 many people are so willing to provide you with  
21 information, if you just ask.  
22       Thank you, so very time. Appreciate it.

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1 I'd like to open the floor for questions.  
2       MR. BEDNARCZYK: Susan, I want to  
3 thank you. It was an excellent presentation.  
4 And on behalf of the committee and the veterans  
5 of this country, I want to thank you for your  
6 initiative.  
7       MS. ROSSOMANDO: Thank you, so much.  
8       MR. BEDNARCZYK: I'd like to open it  
9 up to the committee for questions.  
10       MR. ELMORE: Is your state chamber of  
11 commerce involved in this at all?  
12       MS. ROSSOMANDO: We're working with  
13 them. I have been to Harrisburg. What we

14 wanted to do was find success in our region and,  
15 obviously, since Mark was the Governor of  
16 Pennsylvania, we're looking to develop a program  
17 with them. They are aware of the program but we  
18 haven't rolled it out yet.

19 MR. ELMORE: Any requests from other  
20 parts of the country?

21 MS. ROSSOMANDO: Just in  
22 conversation, the Denver area has shown an

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1 interest. As you had mentioned, U.S. Chamber of  
2 Commerce.

3 MR. ELMORE: If someone contacted you  
4 and wanted additional information, would this be  
5 what you would send them or do you have any  
6 additional?

7 MS. ROSSOMANDO: It would be, more  
8 than likely, what I would provide. However, if  
9 they had more of a tailored -- my goal is to  
10 create sort of like an outline, these are the  
11 types of things you would have to have in place.  
12 And if there is an interest for me to do that,  
13 obviously, I would take the time to put  
14 something like that together as well as come out  
15 and speak about the program.

16 MR. BEDNARCZYK: I sitting here kind

17 of embarrassed because our committee, we have  
18 discussed many times this issue of awareness and  
19 how to get the word to the veteran community,  
20 and I have to admit my own short fall has been  
21 not to contact the chamber of commerce.  
22 It was so simple. It was staring us right in

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1 the face. Because your deeply ingrained in the  
2 business community and you do have businesses  
3 that are veteran-owned that have not considered  
4 themselves veteran-owned.

5                   MS. ROSSOMANDO: That's what I  
6 encounter a lot, is a lot of them said I served  
7 in Korea, am I a veteran-owned business. Yes,  
8 you are. But it's funny, and again, it is just  
9 building that awareness.

10                   MR. BEDNARCZYK: Just to finish that  
11 thought, what comes to mind when you think about  
12 how your reach is, one of the biggest  
13 conversation pieces, I'm going to mull this down  
14 a little bit, but the biggest conversation piece  
15 is the fact that many corporations across the  
16 country or even federal agencies across the  
17 country say, I'd love to put out a procurement  
18 for veteran-owned businesses, but I can't find  
19 them. And what you're doing is so critical to  
20 raising the awareness level so that we do get

21 qualified businesses into the schedules, so that  
22 businesses, both the Lockheed Martins of the

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1 world, the prime contractors, as well as the  
2 agencies, have a source to go to, to find key  
3 veteran-owned businesses or disabled veteran  
4 business to be able to participate in a  
5 procurement, which then meeting that three  
6 percent goal, that is one way of getting there,  
7 by having people or companies that did  
8 participate. Sarah.

9 DR. ROGERS: One thing, I really like  
10 the fact that you're using CCR.

11 Another thing, even if people don't  
12 intend to use it for getting a federal contract  
13 CCR, you can advertize how long you have been in  
14 business, so it establishes a base line for you  
15 and you can put a lot of different information  
16 on. I don't know how many you registered in CCR  
17 but it gives you places to put good contact  
18 information, but also the context of your work,  
19 it gives people a reference point. So history  
20 and reference point, whether it is ever used for  
21 Federal Government or not.

22 MS. ROSSOMANDO: Thank you, and since



1 merging with Pronet, we have found CCR is the  
2 core way that people identify.

3           DR. ROGERS: And you do have to get a  
4 Dunn & Bradstreet numbers, a Dunn's number, but  
5 it's free. Even the veterans, when they get the  
6 stuff like, I got my information from the small  
7 business office of the systems command out in  
8 San Diego, but if they hadn't emphasized to me  
9 that that was going to be free, Dunn &  
10 Bradstreet has a really good marketing campaign  
11 to get you to spend more money, and they will  
12 call you over time, oh, someone pulled your  
13 stuff. It means someone pulled your stuff so you  
14 should pay us 3,000. Thank you, but I'm not  
15 going to right now. I am making payroll.

16           MS. ROSSOMANDO: You're so right, a  
17 lot of the business owners have said, well, that  
18 seems like such a hard process, too long. What  
19 we did is sat down with Joe McDevitt, who I  
20 would like to give kudos to him. We have  
21 developed a cheat sheet, three pages. I can  
22 e-mail that to you, if you want to provide me

1 with your business cards because I forget to put  
2 that in here. At the beginning of the

3 information, it basically says it is about  
4 building awareness. If you're not in here, no  
5 one will know. Then it says, we promise it will  
6 take you about 45 minutes if you have all this  
7 information before you get started, and it talks  
8 about the fact, a phone number for your Dunn's  
9 number, and it's free. And a couple of our  
10 members -- because what we do, one thing I  
11 didn't mention, was supervisor network.  
12 Traditionally, we like the businesses to have  
13 been in business for at least three years just  
14 because that shows the prime contractors that  
15 they are able to manage growth, and they have  
16 been able to be fairly successful. That is one  
17 component of work your business, that we try to  
18 qualify those businesses. We mail them the CCR,  
19 the cheat sheet for the CCR.

20 DR. ROGERS: If you're doing three  
21 years, that would qualify me immediately. And I  
22 have a year-and-a-half of working with the

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1 Government.

2 MS. ROSSOMANDO: It is a case-by-case  
3 basis. We had a couple veterans that came to  
4 the communication session and one had only been  
5 in business for a year. However, he was able to

6 say that he had had these contracts. We put him  
7 through the program. It is a loose -- not  
8 loose, but it is basically, ideally, we want you  
9 to be in business for three years. We didn't  
10 come up with that number. It was the  
11 procurement officers who did. Every person has  
12 access. We take a look at their application  
13 individually and have conversations with you.

14 DR. ROGERS: So the contracting  
15 officer, that was the one at Lockheed Martin?

16 MS. ROSSOMANDO: No. We have an  
17 advisory council of 27. All those companies,  
18 all their procurement officers are involved with  
19 the decision-making process on the supplier  
20 network curriculum. And we actually have  
21 committee meetings, and all of them collectively  
22 decided they wanted it to be about three years.

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1 MR. BEDNARCZYK: I will note, for  
2 business insurance purposes, there is a  
3 significant difference in rates, with two years  
4 being the cutoff. So that from zero to 24  
5 months, if you are in business, you are paying  
6 much higher rates as opposed to 24 and above. I  
7 suppose it is a flip of the coin whether it is  
8 two years or three years, but I understand the  
9 point. It is more than just I started the

10 business yesterday type thing.

11                   MS. ROSSOMANDO: Exactly, and I think  
12 you bring a valid point and you are perfectly  
13 legitimate in saying a year-and-a-half because  
14 you have had this success. That is where we sit  
15 down and work with the companies.

16                   DR. ROGERS: I registered with CCR as  
17 I opened my business, as I started, and had work  
18 immediately to go to. I had a contract agency.  
19 Soon, I just had to build the business to go and  
20 get the work. There are some veteran businesses  
21 like that, that they will have work immediately.  
22 I would hope you all would also consider perhaps

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1 helping mentor them along as they are getting  
2 started, because it certainly gets you off on  
3 the right foot.

4                   MS. ROSSOMANDO: And I'd be  
5 interested, if you have time, to shoot you an  
6 e-mail after this. We don't want to alienate  
7 the group that is not well established. That is  
8 the entrepreneur. That is why when we have  
9 communication sessions, we do provide them with  
10 the different -- we actually do talk about the  
11 CV. I see that Bruce is represented here. Vet  
12 corporation and funding opportunities for

13 entrepreneurs. We're looking to develop sort of  
14 like that initial program for the Vetwork group,  
15 the people that aren't ready.

16 DR. ROGERS: Just getting started to  
17 help them not fail.

18 MS. ROSSOMANDO: If you have  
19 discussions, I would welcome them because I  
20 think that's just another component of the  
21 program that could only make it better.

22 MR. ELMORE: First question, in your

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1 survey, do you ask about access to capital?

2 MS. ROSSOMANDO: No, we don't.

3 MR. ELMORE: Would you consider it?

4 MS. ROSSOMANDO: Again, this isn't a  
5 full proof method.

6 MR. ELMORE: Part of what we're going  
7 through internally right now is we're trying to  
8 identify gaps in access to capital. We call our  
9 lending programs capital, which is why I asked  
10 it that way, but I'm looking for feedback. In  
11 fact, I will be asking the America Legion at  
12 their midwinter conference. So if you can  
13 gather that sort of stuff and provide it back to  
14 me, it will reenforce where we try to go as we  
15 move forward with our lending programs.

16                   A number of thoughts. I was excited  
17 to get to chat with you. I think this could  
18 turn out to be one of the significant things  
19 that's happened in the world of veterans  
20 business because of the chamber involvement and  
21 the fact that it grew out of your chamber, it  
22 wasn't me trying to convince somebody in

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1 headquarters this might be a nice idea.  
2 I think that's huge, and I offer that whatever  
3 my office can do to help you grow this idea  
4 across the country.

5                   MS. ROSSOMANDO: Don't speak too  
6 soon.

7                   MR. ELMORE: I'm dead serious about  
8 this because this is exactly where I've been  
9 trying to go.

10                  A couple points that I would urge  
11 you, if you haven't, and we will try to put you  
12 in touch with our veteran business centers, one  
13 of which is in Pittsburgh, and another of which  
14 operates in New York, it might be helpful to you  
15 there. And then something I'm going to prompt  
16 you to say to the committee, have you looked at  
17 small businesses that are owned by reserve and  
18 guard members in any of the work that you do  
19 yet, is that a question that's even been

20 contemplated?

21                   MS. ROSSOMANDO: We did when we  
22 looked at the data collected from the Vets

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1 corporation. We do have the information that  
2 they have provided. However, at this time it is  
3 not something we're actively pursuing. However,  
4 again, it is something that as we develop the  
5 website again, there is still opportunity to  
6 continue to develop that since it is not  
7 launched until the end of the month.

8                   MR. ELMORE: We will talk off line,  
9 but know that about 99 percent of your  
10 reservists and guard members were self-employed,  
11 those are the labor market. And if they are  
12 been called or they are going to be called,  
13 there is likely to be a traumatic effect on the  
14 business. Then I think the chambers could be  
15 the center point on how we coalesce and mobilize  
16 a full range what you're doing now of assistance  
17 to support them before they go and after they  
18 get back. I think you guys could be central to  
19 that.

20                   Last point which I had asked you to  
21 mention in the committee. You have something  
22 akin to a military and veterans affairs

1 committee at your chamber. There is one in St.  
2 Louis, for example. I'd be interested in  
3 knowing a little more about that because I think  
4 probably most chambers have that sort of an  
5 entity, at least the bigger ones.

6 MS. ROSSOMANDO: At this time, we do  
7 not have a committee specific to veteran  
8 affairs. As we develop this program, what we've  
9 done and as we talk at the board meeting is  
10 something we may seriously consider because we  
11 have taken such an initiative with this program.  
12 We're working with the union league, which is  
13 basically an area of the greater Philadelphia  
14 area comprised of high level executives  
15 throughout the region, and they have an armed  
16 forces committee. So that's who I am working  
17 directly with.

18 They have been a valuable resource  
19 within their business context that they have.  
20 That is really how I met Joe. That's sort of  
21 why I'm here today, because Joe is how Bill  
22 found me.

1 MR. SHARPE: This may be a stretch to



2 bring it in, but when I ran the programs in  
3 Georgia for employment in small business, the  
4 state chamber of commerce had a military and  
5 veteran task force, and they were very, very  
6 helpful to us, the least of being to assist in  
7 outreach. But I agree with Bill, this could be  
8 something that we need to probably pursue with  
9 vigor, even to the point since your previous  
10 governor is head of the chamber, you know, there  
11 is a national association of chamber of  
12 commerces that meets annually.

13 MS. ROSSOMANDO: Yes.

14 MR. SHARPE: And if you could  
15 convince your ex-governor to get you on the  
16 agenda to preach this in maybe a smaller  
17 package, I think you would be surprised at the  
18 reception.

19 MS. ROSSOMANDO: We have seriously  
20 considered that I attended the conference in St.  
21 Louis this past summer, and it was in its  
22 infantile stages. I did share at the senior

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1 management meeting where I have gotten a little  
2 bit of interest from different companies. That  
3 is something we're actually working to get an

4 article in the ACCE magazine within the next  
5 couple months about the program, and I  
6 definitely a hundred percent can say that I  
7 think that's something we need to do.

8 MR. BEDNARCZYK: Bettye.

9 MS. PAYNE: I have a question about  
10 the education program. What are some of the  
11 things that you found out from your supplier  
12 network and from the Vetwork specific training  
13 that might help us, elaborate on what you  
14 provide the veteran business owners?

15 MS. ROSSOMANDO: The types of  
16 education primarily, that program is four half  
17 days for four weeks or two full days. What we  
18 provide them in the beginning does start off  
19 with a panel discussion, talks about small  
20 businesses, and how they got started. Then we  
21 also talk about -- some of it is a little bit  
22 boring, to be honest, but they need to learn the

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1 P card information, the financing for growth,  
2 the managing for growth.

3 For the veteran specific curriculum,  
4 we're developing more on Government contracting.  
5 Representatives from the GSA have spoken at the  
6 programs. Also, one thing that I didn't mention  
7 that I think is extremely important is having

8 both Lockheed martin is really important because  
9 Lockheed Martin is a DOD contractor, obviously,  
10 but one thing we want people to be aware of,  
11 there are different types of opportunities for  
12 veterans. Having a non-traditional company  
13 supporting the program is important.

14                   And I'm sorry, what is your first  
15 name, Bettye. One of the things that we do  
16 discuss at the supervisor network program is  
17 just to basically take a look at non-traditional  
18 places. You have companies that have internal  
19 beliefs that aren't necessarily regulated by the  
20 Government. For instance, energy suppliers.  
21 They are developing. They want to be diversity  
22 friendly. That's a really big buzz word

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1 everywhere now.

2                   We're asking people to put their  
3 money where their mouth is. And I think that's  
4 important.

5                   MR. ELMORE: It was more a comment,  
6 and I know we have people from the national  
7 chamber. I believe it was last year, and Dick,  
8 tell me if I'm wrong on this, that the national  
9 chamber, in their e-based newsletter that they  
10 send out as well as the print copy did a piece

11 about our reserve and guard work. And I think  
12 the number was 2.1 million people that received  
13 that. I don't recall if that's exactly the  
14 right number, but just for everybody, I wanted  
15 to thank the chamber for that, and thank you for  
16 helping committee understanding the reaching of  
17 what this could become relatively quickly.

18 I think you're right, America will  
19 respond if there is a vehicle that they  
20 recognize as a vehicle they want to be part of.

21 MS. ROSSOMANDO: The highest esteem  
22 to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce for getting a

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1 regional chamber like ourselves involved.  
2 That was my conversation with the Veterans  
3 Business Journal yesterday, they are a national  
4 publication. While they are in business of as  
5 2004, they have 30,000 subscribers, and they  
6 have said they are interested in putting an  
7 article about the program in their national  
8 publication, which will be helpful.

9 MR. DOZIER: Do you have to be a  
10 veteran from that area to attend those sessions?

11 MS. ROSSOMANDO: No. I actually met  
12 some people for the veterans conference, and a  
13 lot of people who came to that on October 18th  
14 were in this area. We had a couple people come

15 up to the program because, again, if we're  
16 interested in replicating this program  
17 throughout the region, one thing, a lot of the  
18 veteran business owners, if they come to these  
19 programs, they still have the opportunity to do  
20 business with the Lockheed Martin in our area,  
21 if they billed a relationship with Regina.  
22 No, it is not closed.

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1                   MR. BEDNARCZYK: That is a perfect  
2 way.

3                   MS. PAYNE: Is the training done in  
4 four consecutive half days?

5                   MS. ROSSOMANDO: No, it is four  
6 weeks. For a small business owner to get  
7 yourself out of the office for that amount of  
8 time is difficult. That's why we provide two  
9 different times. What's nice with the supplier  
10 network program, and if you have specific  
11 questions in your packet, there is a listing of  
12 the curriculums so that will help you out. What  
13 is really nice about supplier network, they have  
14 an opportunity to network with other small  
15 businesses that go through the class, and not  
16 all of them are veteran business owners. Some  
17 are minors, disabled small businesses, and it

18 provide a very unique learning environment  
19 because they learn from one another.

20 I thank you again. I know we're  
21 getting close to the time.

22 MR. BEDNARCZYK: We thank you. We

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1 thank you for taking the time, and I'm sure the  
2 committee, if we have questions, we've got your  
3 number now.

4 MS. ROSSOMANDO: You have my  
5 information, and again, you have this packet.  
6 If you have anyone else that you're interested  
7 in me sending this to, please let me know.  
8 Bettye, did you find that -- do you have this?  
9 Open that up, and it's on the first page here.

10 MS. PAYNE: Okay, got it.

11 MS. ROSSOMANDO: That gives you some  
12 of the curriculum components.

13 MR. BEDNARCZYK: We're going to break  
14 for ten minutes, and we'll come back and work on  
15 the next part of the presentation which, is the  
16 office of strategic alliance.

17 (Short Recess.)

18 MR. BEDNARCZYK: Okay. I'd like to  
19 bring you back into session.

20 (Off The Record.)

21 MR. BEDNARCZYK: Okay. We're back on

22 the record. Our next speaker guess is Taylor

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1 Talt.

2                   MR. ELMORE: Taylor, please set up  
3 and do a small introduction. Taylor works in  
4 our office of strategic alliance. Strategic  
5 alliance handles all of our national memorandums  
6 of understanding, strategic alliance  
7 memorandums, all of our relationships with our  
8 primary, private sector organizations, but they  
9 also organize many of the activities for the  
10 agency.

11                   A little more intro, Taylor, for you  
12 to understand, the advisory committee of  
13 veterans business affairs is named by the  
14 administrator. They report directly to Congress  
15 and the President each year, and the  
16 administrator when the addressed the committee  
17 in September.

18                   MR. BEDNARCZYK: Yes.

19                   MR. ELMORE: In September, they  
20 indicated interest in having the advisory  
21 committee involved in what was then called Expo  
22 2006. So you understand, so it with that,

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1 Taylor, I will throw it to you, sir.

2                   MR. TALT: Thank you very much for  
3 having me. I will say that this year is going  
4 to be a scaled back conference for celebrating  
5 national small business week. Every week the  
6 President announces one week as national small  
7 business week, honors small businesses in one  
8 week.

9                   Last year's conference was here in  
10 D.C. It was an expo, and many difference agenda  
11 items. It had business sessions where panelists  
12 came and spoke from different sectors of the  
13 Government, private sector, and what not. It  
14 had a business matchmaking component. It had  
15 six major award events. It had a trade show  
16 floor.

17                   This year, because our focus and our  
18 energies and resources are to those disaster  
19 areas and to our disaster assistance offices,  
20 we're concentrating our small business week  
21 conference this year to just those small  
22 business winners. And in that, it entails -- it

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1 is going to be the 10th throughout 16th of  
2 April, with a two-day small business week  
3 conference on the 12th and the 13th. There will



4 be four events here in Washington, D.C. On the  
5 12th, there will be two events, a luncheon and  
6 reception, one at the Capital Hill Caucus Room.  
7 And that event will be a luncheon from 12 to 2,  
8 on the 12th honors the procurement winners.  
9 We're in the tires, have just hit the road and  
10 we're rolling. We're ten weeks out from the  
11 event, and a lot of the items we're putting  
12 together now. We have not lined up a vendor in  
13 putting on the event, but we do have a schedule,  
14 and I will roll through that quickly. The 12th  
15 is for the winners evening reception will be at  
16 the State Department, honoring our lenders. The  
17 13th is kind of our bigger events will be at the  
18 Regan International Trade Center in downtown  
19 D.C., and breakfast event which will be catered,  
20 to honor those Phoenix award winners, those  
21 recovering from a disaster.  
22                   And we'll be doing some honoring and

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1 some special recognition to those that were  
2 effected by hurricanes in the Gulf Coast. And  
3 the luncheon at the Regan Center will be  
4 honoring our state small business winners, and  
5 naming the National Small Business Of The Year,  
6 and the two runners up.

7                   So we'll have those four events and  
8 those two days. There will not be this year  
9 trade show floor exhibits. There will not be  
10 business sessions. There will not be business  
11 matchmaking. This will be VIP speakers, keynote  
12 speakers, at all of our events. We will have  
13 for congressional honorary co-chairs to present  
14 our award winners and be there that will be  
15 invited to all events that they want to attend.  
16 We'll be still be giving out the same amount of  
17 awards and honors, the same amount of small  
18 businesses as we have in the past. This year,  
19 we're going to focus on small businesses. It  
20 will not be as years in the past. We have  
21 highlighted SBA, and SBA's involvement with  
22 small business this year because we're so

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1 concentrated in our disaster assistance and  
2 supporting those that have small businesses that  
3 have suffered disaster.

4                   We're scaling it back and curtailing  
5 on highlighting those small businesses  
6 throughout the country, in the world, that have  
7 been instrumental in the last year. In that,  
8 we're focusing that morning event on the 13th to  
9 disaster recovery.

10                   So that's our event this year.

11 Logistically, we would like involvement from you  
12 all in some capacity, whether it's like last  
13 year, we had the opportunity for people to speak  
14 on business special panels and what not. This  
15 year, we're still putting together kind of the  
16 way the events will run but we want as many  
17 people as we can to be involved. And with that,  
18 because we're still in the beginning stages of  
19 getting this thing going, I don't really have  
20 much more to report or offer you as far as that  
21 week's event, but if you have any questions.

22 MR. ELMORE: Real quick, did you say

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1 April 10th through 16th?

2 MR. TALT: Small business week --  
3 will be the small business week and we will take  
4 the 10th throughout 13th.

5 MR. ELMORE: If I can, small business  
6 week is celebrated at the business office side  
7 with two or three days of events at  
8 Philadelphia, Boston, Oakland. There will be  
9 local events, then the national one usually  
10 follows that.

11 MR. TALT: That's correct.

12 DR. METTERS: Is the same thing you  
13 call med week?

14                   MR. TALT: Med week is different. I  
15 think they have already had their med week. No,  
16 they have not.

17                   MR. BEDNARCZYK: Taylor, we're  
18 obviously focused on the veterans. In your  
19 thought process as you're taking something that  
20 was fairly substantial and now getting it down  
21 to a very narrow focus, what do you think --  
22 where do you think we can participate? Because

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1 two days, it seems to me like your two-day  
2 agenda, it is going to happen pretty quick, and  
3 there's very short periods of time. Where do  
4 you think the veteran story can fit in what  
5 you're doing?

6                   MR. TALT: Actually, that's a good  
7 question. A lot of what we're doing, how we  
8 have spaced the event and honoring awards, how  
9 we're going to involve other people in our  
10 events and with the champions being honored at  
11 the reception of the State Department, I think  
12 it would be fitting for the veterans to be  
13 involved in that event because the champions do  
14 want to honor a veteran small business winner.  
15 That being said, there will be -- because the  
16 two events on the 12th, the venues are  
17 restricted by numbers because the rooms are not

18 as big as the Regan Center. We can kind of  
19 control those events, as to how we want  
20 participation, and the people that we have  
21 attending. So with there being a veterans award  
22 honored, I think there can be a place at which

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1 you all could be involved in the state event.  
2 And really, numbers wise, we would work  
3 something out on the 13th as well but those two  
4 events on the 13th will be so dominated by the  
5 disaster in the morning and state winners in the  
6 afternoon, it might be lost in the program  
7 whereby something as specific as that evening  
8 reception on the 12th, we can really point to  
9 that however you want your involvement, kind of  
10 parallel that with the veterans award.

11 MR. BEDNARCZYK: Is there any thought  
12 process within the agency other than this one  
13 particular April 12th to April 13th, is this the  
14 only event that's being scheduled, from the  
15 agency's perspective, for the entire fiscal  
16 year?

17 MR. TALT: No. We have the National  
18 Advisory Council Conference that will happen  
19 within probably four to eight weeks after this  
20 event. Normally, we have the ability to invite

21 a broader range of people to these events. That  
22 being cut back, we'll have other smaller events.

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1 We're going to have a National Advisory council  
2 event in which, if you're talking about other  
3 opportunities for you to participate, there is  
4 that possibility. Further along down the road,  
5 I know that we have plans to do more national  
6 events. I just don't know right now. We  
7 haven't locked anything down, but there will be  
8 more events.

9                   MR. BEDNARCZYK: I may be speaking  
10 out of turn for the committee but one of the  
11 things we're struggling with is the awareness of  
12 this committee. As you were addressing the six  
13 to eight-week -- the national advisory  
14 committee, I am assuming that is the national  
15 advisory committee to the SBA.  
16 We're the national advisory committee to the SBA  
17 on veteran business affairs.

18                   MR. TALT: Now --

19                   MR. BEDNARCZYK: To help us with our  
20 goal of trying to make ourselves more visible  
21 within this town, since the word advisory seems  
22 to be common in both of those, do you think

1 there is any way that you could think through  
2 maybe interweaving us somehow into that event?

3           MR. TALT: Absolutely. And I think  
4 that is something that we can look into to see  
5 how we work it into the agenda. Like I said, a  
6 lot of this stuff is just being put in place  
7 now. So the actual logistics of how the events  
8 are going to run, we're still working on.

9           MR. BEDNARCZYK: I know the  
10 matchmaker event or reverse matchmaker event,  
11 but if there was a way to have a veteran event  
12 not at your April 12th, but the May or June time  
13 frame, would be some way of bringing veteran  
14 business, for the goals of our committee,  
15 bringing veteran businesses together.

16           I don't know if that kind of budget  
17 exists. Quite frankly, maybe you could explain  
18 what happens at the national advisory event.

19           MR. TALT: Actually, I am not  
20 actually involved in that event as I am small  
21 business week. I can take your suggestions  
22 though. I know who is involved in that event,

1 and I can see how there event runs and I can get  
2 back to you on it, but as far as small business

3 week this year, that is kind of how our agenda  
4 works with there being a veterans small business  
5 award and our champions award. I can see and  
6 involvement there but I'll have to run that  
7 through.

8                   MR. ELMORE: Couple of just thoughts  
9 there. Certainly, you can have Cheryl in our  
10 office work with whoever in your office, whether  
11 it is small business weekend or the national  
12 advisory -- called the NAC. I can see value in  
13 both. And we can talk about this after we're  
14 done with Taylor. I can see where maybe we have  
15 a couple of the local people on the advisory  
16 committee participate in the small business week  
17 activities, the state department recognize the  
18 national veteran winner, and at the same time,  
19 try to tie one of your meetings into the NAC, I  
20 assume, the NAC has a meeting. And how many  
21 members are on the NAC?

22                   MR. TALT: I don't want to be

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1 misquoted. I know there was 40, and I know they  
2 have accepted more, so I don't know their exact  
3 number.

4                   MR. ELMORE: It's a bigger number.

5                   MR. TALT: Right.



6 MR. ELMORE: And I expect some of  
7 those would be veterans. Something that you all  
8 would do might be jointly with whatever makes  
9 sense to the national advisory committee, they  
10 are the national advisory committee just like  
11 you are the veterans committee.

12 The idea of whatever kind of event  
13 you're going to do around their being here, we  
14 could do either a mirror of that or a part that  
15 relates specifically to veterans. I am  
16 certainly open to that, and I would ask Cheryl  
17 in our office to work with your office to make  
18 sure that we build that veterans piece into it,  
19 but I will leave that for you all to discuss.

20 MR. TALT: We have weekly task  
21 committee meetings that I will make sure I send  
22 out an update to Cheryl, and they are actually

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1 today at 3:00. So starting next week -- we're  
2 not going to have one today, but starting next  
3 week, you can send someone down to hear how the  
4 events unfold of how logistics are going to run,  
5 and make sure something works out where everyone  
6 is involved. I will put you in contact with the  
7 NAC as well, just so when they start doing their  
8 conference, they can keep you in the loop.

9 MR. BEDNARCZYK: I just want to point

10 out, this is my own personal comment. As many  
11 as a million people were affected by Hurricane  
12 Katrina. There are many more millions being  
13 affected by the war in Iraq and Afghanistan.  
14 I understand the agenda for April 12th and 13th  
15 is going to be very tight, very concentrated,  
16 probably not the right venue, but if we could do  
17 something in exposing the veterans and the  
18 business issue that we could actually work with  
19 you, I know Dennis would love to interact with  
20 whoever is responsible for that.

21 DR. METTERS: He's good at that  
22 point.

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1 MR. BEDNARCZYK: To offer advice and  
2 counseling as to how we could do something. I'm  
3 sure the veteran service organizations would  
4 like to participate as well.

5 MS. PAYNE: How many awards do you  
6 give out at this breakfast on the 13th, the  
7 Phoenix award?

8 MR. TALT: There are three Phoenix  
9 awards, and there will be others that are  
10 honored specifically down in the Gulf Coast.

11 MR. BEDNARCZYK: Any more questions?  
12 Scott.

13                   MR. GOLDEN: Yes. I'm glad to hear  
14 that you're working down in these disaster  
15 areas. There is now, thanks to the VA and VAH,  
16 there's going to be two conferences, one in New  
17 Orleans and Biloxi. We had requested that the  
18 SBA send a representative down there. We have  
19 been refused this, for a veterans conference.

20                   My question to you is, why?

21                   MR. TALT: Will you repeat that?

22                   MR. GOLDEN: We have asked for the

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1 SBA to a representative these two areas. We had  
2 three. One, New Orleans used serves 220,000  
3 veterans a year. Biloxi, Gulf Port, has stepped  
4 up to the plate in hosting another event. We  
5 had requested that. We have been turned down,  
6 and the question is why.

7                   MR. TALT: I will have to look into  
8 that. I don't know the answer to that  
9 personally, I don't, but I can definitely look  
10 into that.

11                   MR. GOLDEN: I wish you would because  
12 we do request because if you're going to name an  
13 agency, that you at least back our veterans, and  
14 so far, we find that lacking.

15                   MR. TALT: Okay.

16 MR. BEDNARCZYK: Any other questions  
17 of Taylor?

18 MR. ELMORE: Just a comment. Again,  
19 we will follow-up with you. I will have Cheryl  
20 work with your office, and if the committee  
21 wants us to, we will look at how the committee  
22 would be involved in both.

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1 MR. BEDNARCZYK: We could rearrange  
2 our schedule, try to meet that week, and we  
3 could help in some of the events.

4 MR. DOZIER: The small business week  
5 is to honor those small businesses that have  
6 been successful in coming into the market.  
7 Isn't it also appropriate for an organization or  
8 something, just like the young lady who was just  
9 here, to award somebody who's put together a  
10 program to train people how to start.

11 MR. TALT: Yes. There are several  
12 different criteria to being successful. These  
13 small businesses are nominated not only for  
14 their financial success but also their  
15 training, their volunteering in the community.  
16 There is a different set of criteria. You don't  
17 need to just be successful financially.

18 MR. DOZIER: Is that so?

19 MR. BEDNARCZYK: That's an

20 interesting thought.

21                   MR. ELMORE: A couple comments. One  
22 is, yes, I think the idea of an award and I will

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1 throw this out, our office picks a relevant  
2 business development officer of the year each  
3 year. And the one from this year is from New  
4 York City. Now, the person that she mentioned  
5 from Philadelphia, she had been working closely  
6 to our veteran business officer there. So we  
7 typically we would bring our VPD on for the year  
8 in for the small business week conference. We  
9 may hold off and bring him in for this later  
10 event in May or June, especially if we can build  
11 some event that could include exactly what you  
12 suggest, some award, some recognition that goes  
13 out to Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce --  
14 whoever, thanking them for their protective work  
15 and making that part of what we do.

16                   MR. BEDNARCZYK: But I think the idea  
17 that we should look at not only the business  
18 itself but look at a supporting organization  
19 that is promoting veteran businesses is a great  
20 idea. How do you do recommendations, Taylor,  
21 for this, is there a form on the web?

22                   MR. TALT: The nominations guidelines

1 were sent out. We had our last conference in  
2 late April. They were probably sent out in May.  
3 They go through the district offices, and the  
4 district offices receives nominations. They  
5 select their state winners, and then they are  
6 sent here for the national winner. I can refer  
7 you to our website and they will be a link to  
8 Small Business Week 2006. Posted on there is  
9 our nominations guidelines which will show the  
10 criteria of how these small businesses are  
11 nominated and then selected.

12               MR. ELMORE: One is the veterans  
13 champion. I won at the state level three times  
14 when I was young.

15               DR. METTERS: I won a couple times  
16 too.

17               MR. ELMORE: There should be a pool  
18 of probably 50, 60, 70 veterans. There is an  
19 advocacy role in there as well.

20               MR. BEDNARCZYK: Okay. Thank you  
21 very much.

22               MR. ELMORE: Thank you, Taylor.

1               MR. BEDNARCZYK: I think from an

2 agenda point of view, if you will correct me if  
3 I am missing something, we're pretty much from  
4 the record's point of view, coming to the end of  
5 our day's recorded day.

6                   MR. BEDNARCZYK: As our last piece of  
7 business, for the record, Dick on my request to  
8 the individuals with the website?

9                   MR. SNEIDER: Right.

10                  MR. BEDNARCZYK: Can you fill us in  
11 where we stand on getting them to appear in  
12 front of the committee?

13                  MR. SNEIDER: I did not have a chance  
14 to see him this afternoon. I know he is in a  
15 meeting. When we left, I was talking about  
16 midday, 11:30, and he was off then to a meeting  
17 that, coincidentally, had to do with small  
18 business week and the web-related issues  
19 associated with getting that. So he did not  
20 have time to come before us. Cheryl had left  
21 him a note. I expressed briefly the concerns.  
22 So far as any structural re-design of the web,

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1 that probably would not be possible, at least in  
2 the short-term, in the short term, by the end of  
3 the fiscal year, but if there are within the  
4 existing structure that we have there, for

5 example, the one scenario that was pointed out  
6 there were several reports this information is  
7 very interesting, very useful, however, from the  
8 buttons on the other side, how would I get  
9 there, how would I know that this is there. So  
10 what he offered up to me on that was, if we want  
11 to more clearly associate the buttons as to  
12 topics and detailed information, then he is  
13 amenable to that. It's not that he's not  
14 amenable to changes. It's just that we have a  
15 basically two front process. The office of  
16 communications, the public liaison, also is  
17 responsible for web content. So we have overall  
18 web content and web management.

19                   So now we have the approval process  
20 that says what goes on there, how it should be  
21 structured, how it be displayed, things like  
22 that. Then we have another organization, our

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1 office on CIO, our computer office, they then  
2 manage the infrastructure. And so they are  
3 laden pretty heavy with contractor support, and  
4 right now that support is somewhat thin. Thin,  
5 as well as thin from a contractor support and  
6 SBA support, and from a priority support with  
7 the priority being right now, as I heard Taylor,  
8 we're about ten weeks out from small business



9 week, and as I understand it, there is a lot  
10 that has to be done.

11                   That is the priority and focus. It  
12 doesn't mean everything else shuts down and  
13 stops.

14                   MR. BEDNARCZYK: So the answer in  
15 short is that over the next 24 hours, we're not  
16 going to see them.

17                   MR. SCHNEIDER: Without going back  
18 and trying to refine and hone in as to what we  
19 really want from him, I would say no. I would  
20 say it's not likely. And the other part is that  
21 because he was explaining from a content  
22 standpoint, he may say one thing. However, it

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1 may -- he may not be able to follow through on a  
2 delivery standpoint, from the CIO group, of  
3 actually getting it implemented.

4                   MR. BEDNARCZYK: Got you. I am going  
5 to go around the table, do something we haven't  
6 done, but I'd like the committee, since we're  
7 here, to give me their input because I  
8 personally believe that this is an issue this we  
9 need to solve before we leave here. I'd like  
10 everything's either thumbs up or thumbs down as  
11 to how we pursue that. Sarah.

12 DR. ROGERS: Do you mean just for the  
13 afternoon or for the website?

14 MR. SCHNEIDER: Tom, let me  
15 interject. I hear what you're saying but  
16 specifically, like when you're asking thumbs up  
17 or thumbs down, what is the issue or issues that  
18 you feel need to be aggressively addressed?

19 MR. BEDNARCZYK: Again, the necessity  
20 of the issue was the posting of the membership  
21 on the website. What we drew from today's  
22 meeting with some of the BSOs, the buttons maybe

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1 could be rearranged a little bit so veterans  
2 could find the site. None of the issues that I  
3 have raised or I have heard anybody on the  
4 committee raise have anything to do with the  
5 structural side of the website. So I think that  
6 we have the issue, as you pointed out. There is  
7 one person who blesses the contents that goes on  
8 to the SBA website and then there is another  
9 person who takes the information and puts it on  
10 the website structural programming, or whatever  
11 the case may be.

12 And it appears from what they have  
13 told you, correct me if I'm wrong, that while  
14 we're in session here today and tomorrow, they  
15 just don't have time to discuss with us what

16 their road blocks are in order to do this.

17               So what I am trying to get to, the  
18 point with the committee is that do they feel as  
19 strong as Dennis and I do that this issue needs  
20 to be resolved before we leave D.C, or do they  
21 not? That was the thumbs up or thumbs down,  
22 because if the committee feels strong about it,

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1 then what we're going to need to do is to ask  
2 Bill to either influence the decision to come  
3 here and talk to us about the website and maybe  
4 fill in the pieces that are missing or for Bill  
5 to go to his boss and to ask if we can have that  
6 time, but I first want the committee to tell me  
7 whether or not they feel as strong as I do.

8               DR. ROGERS: I feel as strong and  
9 maybe even stronger than you do about this, and  
10 I do so for two reasons. One is because I have  
11 struggled with it myself just trying to, as an  
12 individual business owner, trying to get a shred  
13 of information which was very difficulty until I  
14 found Bill Elmore. And he doesn't have time to  
15 talk to all the Sarah Rogers out there in the  
16 world.

17               Second is cultural data point, since  
18 I am tried as a psychiatrist and mediator,

19 veterans come from a cultural group where we  
20 have trust as a very big issue. We like to see  
21 representation of ourselves anywhere that we're  
22 going to try and use something. If you go to

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1 the women's business owners side of the SBA  
2 website, you're going to see faces of women all  
3 over. So we need to see veteran on there, and  
4 we need to see some of little veteran faces and  
5 maybe army retired this or guardsmen, some of  
6 those kinds of things.

7 Yes, I feel as strongly as you do.

8 MR. BEDNARCZYK: Ron.

9 MR. ZOLA: Two points. I feel less  
10 strongly about the issue because the committee  
11 is not about us, it is about who we serve.  
12 There is a caveat to that. The caveat is the  
13 issue that Sarah addressed. It does lend to  
14 credibility, it does lend 00 when you sit there,  
15 you see a bunch -- one of my pet peeves, on the  
16 record, I wouldn't mention which significant  
17 organization that serves veterans who likes to  
18 tout how many veterans are there, but when you  
19 take a look at senior management in the  
20 facilities, it ain't veterans. I think that is  
21 an institutional disconnect.

22 I am less concerned about the picture

1 issue and the committee membership issue. I am  
2 more concerned with the ease with which veterans  
3 can access the service, and that is the real  
4 thing. Leave me out, if you have to. If there  
5 is a limited amount of time, leave me out but  
6 fix it so the veterans can access the system  
7 better.

8 MR. BEDNARCZYK: Bettye.

9 MS. PAYNE: Fix it. With the caveat  
10 that we also explore the other sources available  
11 to us and get the information through every  
12 veteran service organization that will let us  
13 link to their page, etc. Also, the other  
14 organizations that are centered, so let's  
15 approach it from ten prong, so it's everywhere.

16 DR. METTERS: Fix it, but in  
17 deference to Bill, this is not the forum to do  
18 it in. What I'm trying to say, Bill doesn't  
19 have the power to do this all by himself, and he  
20 said that a number of times. He doesn't have  
21 complete control of this. So once we get a vote  
22 on yes, then the next thing I would want to know

1 how are we going to do it, are we going to stop

2 there. If so, what happens? The purpose of

3 this vote.

4 MR. BEDNARCZYK: The purpose of this

5 vote is to get the two.

6 DR. METTERS: It is broken. We need

7 to have it fixed. How do we get it fixed? We

8 don't know.

9 MR. BEDNARCZYK: We're an agency

10 we're supporting, and the agency has the

11 resources. All I want to do, whether it is an

12 off line discussion or on line discussion, is

13 figure out how to fix it. And I think to your

14 point, I think that, Bill, Cheryl had done

15 everything possible to present to them the raw

16 data.

17 All we need is the data posted, and

18 we're not getting that. I'm saying now is the

19 time to talk about it.

20 DR. METTERS: Okay. Now that I know

21 where we're going with this, let me add one

22 more. I suggest if we're willing to fix this

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1 thing, some of us get an audience, a

2 representative and ask for an audience with the

3 administrator or his advisor, and tell them --

4 it is not Bill. We have already been there.  
5 Someone up a little higher.  
6 MR. BEDNARCZYK: Chief of staff.  
7 DR. METTERS: Yes. Meet with him.  
8 MR. BEDNARCZYK: We will. We'll give  
9 the two individuals an opportunity to come here.  
10 DR. METTERS: Everybody agrees we  
11 need to be fixed, but we don't have the  
12 wherewithal. This is not the venue to talk  
13 about how to fix it.  
14 MR. BEDNARCZYK: Right.  
15 MR. SHARPE: Yes, fix it.  
16 MR. BEDNARCZYK: Bill.  
17 MR. ELMORE: Yes.  
18 MR. BEDNARCZYK: Tom, we're here on  
19 record so I'd like to --  
20 MR. ELMORE: Let me go back to part  
21 of what Dick was talking about. The structural  
22 perspective, what we're talking about, let me

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1 put it this way, the first way, how to find  
2 that. It is most important for veterans, how  
3 they find what's available through the agency is  
4 most important, but right behind that is the  
5 info about the committee itself reports the fact  
6 that the committee exists. So, if you will,

7 maybe a page on our page that might be the  
8 committee itself, not just in the reports piece.  
9 I don't know if your discussion with this guy --

10               MR. SNEIDER: No, because their  
11 hang-up, and that's my term, not his, is that  
12 they are now in a next generation of template  
13 for trying to design. They are currently  
14 working in the district offices but I said,  
15 again, my reference is to the button on the  
16 left. If we want to rename one of those, is  
17 that a problem. No problem.

18               MR. BEDNARCZYK: They deserve a  
19 statement of work, for lack of a better term, as  
20 to what we want done, but more importantly, more  
21 importantly, all I want them to do is engage in  
22 a conversation of what can be done easily and

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1 now, so that we can get it done with  
2 anticipation that they will give you support for  
3 the redo of the website.

4               And I think sarah's point is we may  
5 not be able to solve all the problems tomorrow  
6 but we should be able to get you the leverage to  
7 work on the redo so that it is more user  
8 friendly to the veteran community but we're not  
9 even. All we're doing is for 7 months asking to



10 have our names posted on the web sites. There  
11 are things on the website that have no reference  
12 whatsoever to the committee. You can read the  
13 committee minutes, but you don't know who is on  
14 the committee, where they are from, what their  
15 backgrounds are. So there is a disconnect on  
16 our web page. All we're trying to do is some  
17 simple things.

18                   I'm saying whether it is on the  
19 record or off the record, I think we need to  
20 have the two gentlemen or the two people here  
21 while we're in session so we can just talk about  
  
22 this to get it done. That's all. It's a simple

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1 thing. It's not hard but I am a civilian.

2                   MR. ELMORE: I will push back and see  
3 if we can't get somebody down here, if not this  
4 afternoon, then sometime tomorrow.

5                   MR. SNEIDER: I think, tomorrow.

6                   MR. ELMORE: All we need is ten or 15  
7 minutes. The primary interest is making sure  
8 that the committee is identifiable,  
9 recognizable, and just as important, if not more  
10 important, is you all help us push to get a more  
11 prominent way, a simpler way for veterans to  
12 find veterans programs at SBA because they're

13 frustrated, as I am, that we're not easy to  
14 find.

15                   And the second part of this, you  
16 mentioned a meeting, and we're working on that.  
17 The other is what Sarah said, some common  
18 sensitivity, if you will, about how veterans as  
19 a community, in some sense see them, want to see  
20 themselves reflected in what we do so that  
21 becomes the face of the page, and the other is  
22 links.

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1                   We have links. I can honestly tell  
2 you I haven't looked at our links. Mostly we're  
3 out trying to get links to us on the work that  
4 we do. So I would ask the committee to look at  
5 our links, and we will internally take a look  
6 see if we can get an inventory of all our  
7 links.

8                   MR. SNEIDER: I was going to jump in  
9 on what you said a second ago. I don't know if  
10 there is a sub committee.

11                   MR. BEDNARCZYK: It is kind of like  
12 off the side issue.

13                   MR. SNEIDER: In your sub committee  
14 meeting this afternoon, if you could maybe take  
15 10, 15 minutes or just ad hoc put together

16 together, it's like what are the things that you  
17 see as just being cumbersome, not user friendly,  
18 just not helpful. That's one thing,  
19 structurally. And the second thing is the  
20 content. I think we have a good feel for the  
21 content, so far as problem, what the solution  
22 is, just a veterans committee button that when

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1 you click on it, you see the minutes and you  
2 know what it pertains it.

3               We can clean that up that there can  
4 be an intro, and other things there, but if you  
5 could just take 10 or 15 minutes.

6               MR. BEDNARCZYK: Okay. Fair enough.  
7 Okay. Now, we will adjourn our first day  
8 session.

9               (Thereupon, the above meeting was  
10 adjourned, to be continued on the  
11 date of Wednesday, February 8, 2006.)

12               \*               \*               \*               \*               \*

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CERTIFICATE OF COURT REPORTER

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I, Jackie Smith, court reporter in and for  
the District of Columbia, before whom the foregoing  
meeting was taken, do hereby certify that the  
meeting was taken by me at the time and place  
mentioned in the caption hereof and thereafter  
transcribed by me; that said transcript is a true  
record of the meeting.

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Jackie Smith

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